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Mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides a review of progress achieved by the United Nations system in mainstreaming the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in its work. The second report on the topic, it is submitted pursuant to the mandates of the General Assembly and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012. Particular attention is given in the report to processes and tools that could boost the mainstreaming of economic, social and environmental dimensions in the work of the United Nations system. It points to the creation of the high-level political forum on sustainable development as an important development and analyses whether sustainable development approaches are guiding the strategic plans of funds, programmes and specialized agencies, as well as their operational activities for development in developing countries. The report highlights that recent developments in quality assurance and safeguard mechanisms have given a boost to the mainstreaming of sustainable development. Special consideration is also given to the role of inspections and evaluations in driving sustainable development approaches in the United Nations system.

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I. Introduction

1. At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, world leaders renewed their commitment to sustainable development and to promoting sustainable development for present and future generations. They outlined a broad vision that places poverty eradication as the greatest global challenge facing the world today and as an indispensable requirement for the attainment of sustainable development.

2. In the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want", Member States agreed that the United Nations system, including international financial institutions, should support the efforts of all countries, in particular developing countries, in the achievement of sustainable development (resolution 66/288, para. 91).

3. In order to fulfil the renewed commitments, world leaders recognized that the United Nations system needed to approach its own work from a sustainable development perspective. They therefore called on the programmes, funds and specialized agencies to mainstream the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development throughout the work of the United Nations system. In accordance with the request contained in paragraph 93 of the resolution, in 2013, the Secretary-General reported to the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, on the progress made in that regard (A/68/79-E/2013/69). The report provided reflections on the conceptual framework for mainstreaming sustainable development in the work of the United Nations system and identified achievements and challenges. It also pointed out that progress in that regard would enhance the capacity of the United Nations system to support Member States in taking forward the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals.

4. In his report, the Secretary-General also identified important conditions for mainstreaming economic, social and environmental dimensions in the work of the United Nations system, including commitment at the highest level bolstered by clear and coherent intergovernmental guidance, and stronger coordination and policy coherence. Also critical were adequate institutional support, analytical capacity-building, and mobilization and allocation of resources to drive sustainable development.

5. As requested by the General Assembly in resolution 68/210, the present report provides an update on developments related to the mainstreaming of economic, social and environmental dimensions in the work of the United Nations system since 2013 (section II). It addresses institutional reform and the creation of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, which are expected to lead to coherent intergovernmental guidance in that area (section III), and looks at the role of inter-agency coordination mechanisms in mainstreaming the three dimensions of sustainable development (section IV). The report analyses the extent to which mainstreaming is reflected in the strategic plans of funds, programmes and specialized agencies, as well as in their operational activities for development in developing countries (section V). It reviews recent developments in quality assurance and safeguard mechanisms as a tool for mainstreaming the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development (section VI). Consideration is also given to the role of inspections and independent evaluations in

the United Nations system (section VII). Last, the report draws conclusions and provides a set of recommendations to further advance the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in the work of the United Nations system (section VIII).

II. United Nations system at work: an update

A. Translating sustainable development into the work of the United Nations system: practical implications

6. Sustainable development is not a new concept. Since the convening of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development 22 years ago, sustainable development has become the overarching framework for the work of the United Nations system.[1] However, systematically translating that vision into practice is still proving arduous, and the way the United Nations system works does not routinely reflect the interlinkages between the economic, social and environmental dimensions. Organizations must work together to provide integrated support to help countries to pursue nationally owned sustainable development results.

7. In attempting to define in his previous report (A/68/79-E/2013/69) what "mainstreaming the three dimensions of sustainable development" means, the Secretary-General indicated that:

> Not all United Nations system policies and programmes have all three dimensions; however, it is important that the potential economic, social and environmental implications of policies and programmes be carefully considered. This is essential in order to avoid unintended impacts, conflicting policies or unsustainable outcomes. It also enables the United Nations system to identify synergies and possible triple-win opportunities.

8. Mainstreaming sustainable development requires, first, the adoption by individual organizations of strategies, programmes and projects that include simultaneously all three dimensions and take account of their interrelations and, second, stronger collaboration among various United Nations organizations, notably those in the economic, social and environmental areas, in order to ensure consideration of all three dimensions when providing support to countries.

B. Post-2015 development agenda as a driving force

9. The post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals will have major implications for the way development is pursued at the national, regional and international levels. The United Nations system needs to ensure that it adapts to support the agenda. Success in that regard will depend in no small part on

[1] In the present report, the "United Nations system" is to be understood in its broader sense and hence includes funds, programmes, specialized agencies, departments of the United Nations Secretariat, other entities and international financial institutions that are independent specialized agencies of the United Nations system. The "United Nations development system" refers only to the 32 funds, programmes and specialized agencies that are members of the United Nations Development Group. It thus excludes the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

the ability of the system to mainstream the three dimensions of sustainable development in its work.

10. Not only must such integration be realized within each organization but coordination and cooperation must also be stepped up within the United Nations system as a whole. This is essential so that the system can provide integrated support to Member States, grounded in the unique expertise of all the funds, programmes and specialized agencies.

11. The need for integrated support and coordination derives from a characteristic of the post-2015 development agenda. While the focus on the Millennium Development Goals will remain, the agenda will also address economic and environmental issues because it will have poverty eradication and sustainable development at its core.

12. The post-2015 development agenda will be both universal and relevant to each country, taking into account their varying capacities and levels of development. A question that will need to be addressed is how the United Nations can bolster the implementation of such a universal development agenda. This may require taking a close look at some of its focus and activities. It will be important to make close linkages between the normative and operational roles of the United Nations. The new universal development agenda may also require frameworks for operational activities that are more inclusive and flexible.

13. Governments have been explicit in stating that the post-2015 development agenda should effect transformational change that is ambitious yet cognizant of intergenerational solidarity. Implementing such an agenda will require intellectual and analytical inputs from the United Nations system.

14. A transformative post-2015 development agenda must be supported by a renewed global partnership for development and be bolstered by multi-stakeholder partnerships. It is important therefore to deepen the engagement of the United Nations system with a breadth of development actors while also ensuring that accountability mechanisms conducive to engaging widely in such partnerships are in place.

C. Mainstreaming specific issues in the work of the United Nations system: what has been learned

15. In his previous report, the Secretary-General pointed out that the United Nations system had mainstreamed specific issues in its work in several areas, notably gender equality and women's empowerment, but also climate change, employment and decent work, and human rights (see box 1 below).

16. Based on the experiences of the United Nations system in that area, the following can be suggested as building blocks for mainstreaming the three dimensions of sustainable development in the work of the United Nations system:

(a) Strong, enabling intergovernmental mandates and guidance, with regular reporting by the Secretary-General;

(b) Systematic reflection of such mandates in the strategic plans of individual organizations;

(c) Development of a conceptual understanding of what mainstreaming economic, social and environmental dimensions means and entails;

(d) Engaging of the inter-agency machinery, namely the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), through the expression of broad commitment and guidance and, as appropriate, the adoption of a system-wide plan or toolkits; the United Nations Development Group, to bolster mainstreaming at country level; and dedicated inter-agency groups;

(e) Clear methodology, guidance and tools on how to mainstream the three dimensions;

(f) Mobilization of United Nations country teams and system-wide capacity-building on how to use these tools;

(g) Strong system of accountability with adequate indicators and regular reporting.

17. More reflection is needed within the United Nations system and by Member States on which combination of the building blocks would be most conducive to mainstreaming economic, social and environmental dimensions in the work of the United Nations. It is important, for example, to consider whether a system-wide action plan or road map is needed. Section III examines recent progress related to intergovernmental guidance.

Box 1
Mainstreaming thematic issues in the work of the United Nations system

Gender

Efforts to strengthen gender mainstreaming have been undertaken in response to the series of United Nations conferences on women and gender equality. A United Nations system-wide policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women was endorsed by CEB in 2006. Two of the following three interconnecting and mutually reinforcing mechanisms have been developed as an accountability framework for implementation:

(a) United Nations country team performance indicators for gender equality and the empowerment of women were introduced in 2008;

(b) A system-wide action plan on corporate processes and institutional arrangements at the individual United Nations entity level was approved by CEB in 2012. Unified annual reporting for the action plan began in 2013 and the results will set a baseline for reporting to ensure the accountability of the United Nations system. Almost the entire United Nations system (62 entities, departments and offices) has, for the second time, reported back on a common set of performance indicators;

(c) The third mechanism — accountability for the contributions of the United Nations system to gender equality development results at the country and normative levels — is expected to be developed once the first two have taken root more firmly.

Accountability frameworks require heavy initial investments of time, resources and staff, suggesting the suitability of a phased approach in their development and implementation.

Consistent coordination by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), as a central hub responsive to the needs of the whole United Nations system, has been crucial to engaging stakeholders and supporting the effective communication and networking necessary to the success of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

The process has resulted in substantial advances in the performance of the United Nations system on gender mainstreaming. Gaps remain, however, and consistent and systematic efforts will be required to ensure that the United Nations system continues to progress, with a view to meeting the performance indicators set out in the Action Plan by 2017 (2019 for United Nations entities with a technical focus).

Employment and decent work

In the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) and the ministerial declaration adopted at the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2006 of the Economic and Social Council (A/61/3/Rev.1, chap. III, para. 50), Member States decided to mainstream the goals of full and productive employment and decent work in policies, programmes and activities, with a view to achieving the internationally agreed development goals. In 2007, CEB endorsed the Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work, and in 2009 a Global Jobs Pact was adopted to boost employment, production, investment and aggregate demand, and promote decent work for all. Most recently, the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development put major emphasis on "promoting full and productive employment, decent work for all and social protection" (resolution 66/288, annex).

Promoting decent employment is essential to achieving food security and reducing poverty. In recognition of this linkage, in 2008 the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) was explicitly asked by the Economic and Social Council to mainstream the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all in its policies, programmes and activities. In response, FAO prepared a guidance note to help FAO field offices integrate decent work in their programmes, and in 2012 it published *Decent Rural Employment for Food Security: A Case for Action*, which provided a conceptual analysis of the links between employment and the four dimensions of food security. The International Labour Organization and FAO are now developing guidance materials and tools for capacity development as well as an integrated country approach for promoting decent rural employment. Dedicated technical guidelines to mainstream the decent work aspect in the FAO country programming framework are part of the official country programming framework toolkit.

The FAO reviewed strategic framework for the period from 2010 to 2019, which was approved by the Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations at its thirty-eighth session, gives increased importance to decent rural employment. Around 60 countries have already referred explicitly to employment priorities in framing their collaboration with FAO under their respective country programming frameworks.

III. Changing intergovernmental landscape

18. The first building block for integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development in the work of the United Nations system is intergovernmental guidance. There have been important developments in that regard. In September 2013, the high-level political forum on sustainable development met for the first time. Established at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the forum is expected to provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations for sustainable development, follow up and review progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments, enhance the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in a holistic and cross-sectoral manner at all levels, ensuring the appropriate consideration of new and emerging sustainable development challenges (resolution 67/290, para. 2).

19. The guidance of the forum will thus greatly benefit the efforts of the United Nations system to develop a common vision and agenda for reform aimed at helping countries to adopt coherent strategies for sustainable development.

20. It will also be important for the United Nations system to support the deliberations of the nascent forum, be a partner in the implementation of decisions and report back on challenges and achievements. The forum will conduct regular reviews on the follow-up and implementation of sustainable development commitments as of 2016. These will include developed and developing countries but also reviews of relevant United Nations entities. If prepared and conducted effectively, the United Nations system reviews could provide important opportunities to discuss, for example, whether small groups of organizations are providing integrated support to Member States in a given area and whether individual organizations are mainstreaming economic, social and environmental dimensions in their work. The forum will need to decide on how it will conduct these reviews so that they lead to meaningful evaluations and findings. The peer reviews conducted in the context of the Environment Management Group, although focused on environmental sustainable management, could provide one example of how to conduct reviews.

21. At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Members States also decided to strengthen the role of the Economic and Social Council in coordinating the follow-up to the outcomes of major conferences and summits in the economic, social, environmental and related fields, and in promoting the balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development (resolution 68/1). The strengthening of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the decision to make its governing body universal — with the establishment of the

United Nations Environment Assembly (pursuant to resolutions 66/288, 67/213 and 67/251) — is also expected to advance the mainstreaming of environmental dimensions within the United Nations system.

22. The coming year will be important in determining how to ensure complementarity and synergies among the various intergovernmental platforms as they deliver on their mandates.

23. The regional commissions have started to organize annual regional forums on sustainable development as a way to channel regional perspectives on sustainable development directly into the discussions of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, which are held in New York. The regional commissions have worked with the regional coordination mechanism they convene to help to shape regional positions on the sustainable development goals. This was done, for example, at the recent Arab high-level forum on sustainable development organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, will pilot the mainstreaming of sustainable development in its thirty-fifth session, to be held in 2014 in Lima.

IV. Role of inter-agency coordination mechanisms in mainstreaming the three dimensions of sustainable development

24. The engagement of inter-agency bodies is another building block for integrating the three dimensions in the work of the United Nations systems. Several United Nations system inter-agency mechanisms are presently focused on helping Member States to develop sustainable development goals.

25. The United Nations System Task Team on the Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda has prepared 29 issues briefs for the stocktaking phase of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals.

26. Theme- and sector-specific coordination mechanisms such as UN-Water and UN-Energy are likewise contributing to the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda.

27. CEB and its subsidiary bodies are engaged in a reflection on how best the United Nations system can support Member States as they transition to a post-2015 development agenda centred on sustainable development. The High-level Committee on Programmes is assisting CEB in fostering an integrated response to the challenges and opportunities faced by the United Nations system as it defines its own contribution within a changed development policy environment. One of the challenges identified is the need for the coherent integration of policies across the three dimensions of sustainable development, within the context of the United Nations mandate of peace and security, development, human rights and the rule of law.

28. Both in the run-up to and following the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in 2012, the United Nations system has made significant advances in mainstreaming environmental dimensions in its work. The work of the Environment Management Group on the framework for advancing environmental and social sustainability in the United Nations system is of particular relevance.

29. The framework contains possible actions for strengthening the environmental and social sustainability of (i) strategies and policies; (ii) operational activities, by means of programmes and projects; and (iii) administrative decisions of the United Nations system, such as facilities management. In his 2013 report, the Secretary-General noted the importance of the framework as a possible point of departure for mainstreaming the three dimensions of sustainable development. In that context, however, the framework will need to be further elaborated to address the three dimensions of sustainable development and will need to be tested. United Nations system inter-agency bodies are currently discussing options for the follow-up of the framework by the United Nations system, and the Environment Management Group is continuing to develop guidance on the implementation of the framework.

30. In the view of some organizations, there is a need for greater clarity on how to mainstream social and economic dimensions in certain areas.

31. The High-level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis[2] provides an example of how various United Nations system organizations and other actors can join forces to address an issue from an economic, social and environmental perspective. The work of the High-level Task Force contributed to the alignment of humanitarian responses to the 2008 food price crisis. It also fed into subsequent longer term efforts within national Governments and regional organizations, as well as into specific initiatives of the Group of Eight and the Group of Twenty. Since 2012, the High-level Task Force has focused on providing support to countries, cities and communities that have embraced the Zero Hunger Challenge initiative, which was launched by the Secretary-General at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development as the basis for a coherent approach to food and nutrition security that integrates all of the dimensions of sustainable development (see box 2 below).

32. A number of lessons can be learned from the approach of the High-level Task Force, for example: the important impact that results when United Nations agencies with different mandates coalesce around a common objective; and the importance of incorporating a partnerships approach to problem-solving, which enables organizations and social groups with very different compositions, mandates, needs, capacities and strengths to develop fully inclusive perspectives and solutions.

Box 2
Integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development in a specific area: the case of food security

In 2008, in response to the global food crisis, a number of funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the World Trade Organization joined forces to develop a Comprehensive Framework for Action on food and nutrition security. The Comprehensive Framework for Action served as the basis for comprehensive, coherent, strategic and unified action across the United Nations system. The work of the High-level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis continues today.

[2] The High-level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, established by the Secretary-General, brings together the heads of 23 United Nations system entities, including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Chief Executive of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the World Trade Organization.

The Comprehensive Framework for Action was designed to be of use to Governments, international and regional organizations, and others with an interest in food security. It consisted of a range of policies and strategies that could be adapted to different settings and jointly implemented by multiple stakeholders to respond to the immediate needs of vulnerable populations and contribute to longer-term resilience.

In March 2012, in the run-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the High-level Task Force produced a common United Nations system-wide position entitled "Food and nutrition security for all through sustainable agriculture and food systems".

At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the Secretary-General launched the Zero Hunger Challenge, an invitation both to Governments and all other stakeholders to commit to actions that will bring an end to hunger. The holistic vision of the Zero Hunger Challenge fully integrates the three pillars of sustainable development in its five objectives, which are: ensuring 100 per cent access to adequate food all year round; eliminating stunting in children under the age of two; ensuring that food systems are sustainable; increasing smallholder productivity and income; and reducing food loss and waste.

In 2012, the High-level Task Force was reoriented to focus on providing support to countries, cities and communities that have embraced the Zero Hunger Challenge initiative.

33. The focus of the inter-agency machinery is currently on both supporting the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda and on preparing the United Nations system for supporting implementation when the agenda is adopted. Further directions on mainstreaming the three dimensions of sustainable development in the work of the United Nations system may be expected as a result of that process.

V. Strategic orientations in the funds, programmes and specialized agencies, and in operational activities for development

A. Strategic plans and policies of the funds, programmes and specialized agencies

34. If sustainable development is to be the guiding framework for United Nations system organizations, it has to be established in the strategic plans of the organizations. This is clearly another building block for integrating the three dimensions in the work of the United Nations system. Regarding operational activities in particular, the strategic orientations of the funds, programmes and specialized agencies are guided by the 2012 quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for the development of the United Nations system (resolution 67/226). In that review, the General Assembly reiterated the call of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development for United Nations

organizations to "further enhance the mainstreaming of sustainable development into their respective mandates, programmes, strategies and decision-making processes in support of the efforts of all countries, in particular developing countries, in the achievement of sustainable development" (resolution 67/226, para. 14).

35. Several United Nations funds and programmes, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Population Fund, UNEP and the World Food Programme, have either adopted their strategic plans for the period 2014-2017 or are in the process of finalizing them. Other United Nations organizations, including the specialized agencies, are updating their existing policy frameworks and management plans to take into account the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. A review of the draft strategic plans and policy papers of several organizations reveals notable progress as well as challenges in mainstreaming sustainable development in the strategic planning of the United Nations development system.

36. It needs to be acknowledged that not all organizations require major adjustments since their mandates and areas of work already integrate environmental, social and economic dimensions. Such is the case, for example, for FAO. In its reviewed strategic framework for the period 2010-2019, FAO developed a vision that mainstreams sustainable development in a balanced manner. It therefore undertakes to achieve a world free of hunger and malnutrition, where food and agriculture contribute to improving the living standards of all, especially the poorest, in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner.

37. Similarly, the title of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization's medium-term programme framework 2010-2013 is "Industrial development for poverty reduction, inclusive globalization and environmental sustainability. The document calls on the organization to address three major global challenges, namely, poverty and inequality, uneven globalization, and environmental degradation and climate change. At the fifteenth session of the General Conference of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, held in Lima in December 2013, its member States reinforced the link between the three dimensions of sustainable development outlined in the organization's mandate by adopting the Lima Declaration entitled "Towards inclusive and sustainable industrial development".

38. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization adopted an integrated approach contributing to sustainable development in its medium-term strategy for 2008-2013. Following the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in 2012, sustainable development was further highlighted as one of the two overarching objectives of the organization's new medium-term strategy for the period 2014-2021, with a view to enhancing its contribution to sustainable development in an even more holistic and cross-sectoral manner.

39. As the environmental pillar of the United Nations system, UNEP represents a special case. Its medium-term strategy for 2014-2017 continues the vision of the previous 2010-2013 strategy. The strategy is derived from the UNEP mandate to be the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment.

40. In other organizations, there is increasing awareness and recognition of the integrated nature of development and the interconnectedness of the related economic, social and environmental dimensions. For example, ESCWA has adopted inclusive and sustainable development as its overarching institutional objective in its 2014-2015 strategic framework. It has also adopted a framework to ensure that its 2016-2017 work programme addresses the integration of sustainable development at the design stage.

41. That awareness is not only seen in the strategic plans of entities with relatively broad mandates but also among entities with specialized mandates and unique expertise in clearly defined sectors. For example, the twelfth general programme of work of the World Health Organization reflects on future challenges and opportunities, including the global economic downturn, urbanization, demographic dynamics and environmental risks.

42. References in the strategic plans to sustainable development or to the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development vary in terms of depth and context. In some cases, sustainable development and the outcome document are referred to as guiding visions. For example, the UNDP strategic plan for the period 2014-2017 acknowledges that the world is undergoing an unprecedented transition and that a rethink of the notion of development is required. Sustainable development is now defined as the central area of work, which reflects a more integrated vision in comparison to previous strategic plans, such as the one for the period 2008-2011. This is evidenced by the outcomes and outputs included in the integrated results and resources framework. The first outcome of UNDP strategic plan is that growth and development are inclusive and sustainable. Similarly, UNFPA emphasizes that the development of its strategic plan was shaped by, inter alia, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in 2012.

43. Other draft strategic plans highlight in general terms the connection between their agency-specific mandates and sustainable development, emphasizing the importance of such areas of work in the post-Millennium Development Goal era. UNICEF states, for example, that healthy, safe and well-educated children are essential for a sustainable planet, and vice versa. Today's children and those of future generations must be nurtured so that they contribute to sustainable development. The World Tourism Organization's strategic white paper for 2014-2015 notes that the contribution of tourism to the global sustainable development agenda through the creation of conditions for competitive and sustainable tourism cuts across the three dimensions of sustainable development.

44. In some cases, although the wording "sustainable development" is not mentioned, the approach taken to address agency-specific mandates can be seen as a reflection of the concept of sustainable development. For example, the World Food Programme aims to deploy multidimensional interventions to address food insecurity and malnutrition, which are critically important to breaking the intergenerational cycle of hunger by facilitating the access of poor people to food, education and health services.

45. Overall, the approach taken and level of priority given to the mainstreaming of sustainable development vary significantly from one agency to another. Nevertheless, there are now many examples of strategic plans that take an integrated approach to ensuring that economic, social and environmental dimensions are

systematically mainstreamed in strategic plans, from objectives through to outcomes, outputs and indicators. Nevertheless, there is a need to further clarify how this can be done system-wide. For example, an important step would be to identify and report on joint outputs among several organizations.

B. United Nations system operational activities

46. Mainstreaming the three dimensions of sustainable development in the United Nations system also requires making changes at the country and programme levels. The United Nations Development Group is revising its guidelines on the development of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks with a view to strengthening their sustainable development content. The effort is an important element in the mainstreaming of sustainable development in the policies, tools and guidance of the United Nations Development Group. It will occur in parallel with the development of case studies on strengthening normative and operational linkages within the United Nations.

47. The 2012 quadrennial comprehensive policy review recognized the achievements of a number of pilot programme countries in implementing, on a voluntary basis, the "Delivering as one" initiative. "Delivering as one" is an important initiative for enhancing the coherence, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations development system at country level (resolution 67/226, para. 134). Benefits from the "Delivering as one" initiative are expected, especially on cross-cutting issues and in the achievement of strategic results.

48. The United Nations Development Group believes that the "Delivering as one" initiative is a tool that can enhance coordination, facilitate access to the range of mandates and capacities of the United Nations system and leverage the comparative advantages of each agency. It can also allow agencies to better plan, manage and deliver on shared results. Although no specific reference is made to sustainable development, the initiative can be expected to be conducive to the mainstreaming of the three dimensions in the work of the United Nations system at the country and regional levels.

49. A survey conducted in 2013 among United Nations resident coordinators by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs revealed that 92 out of 109 countries fall into one of the following categories: a "Delivering as one" pilot country, a self-starter, a Government requesting to join the "Delivering as one" initiative or a Government actively considering joining the "Delivering as one" initiative.

50. A review of nine country-level planning initiatives that were started in 2013 and 2014 was conducted for the present report. The initiatives were either traditional United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, "Delivering as one" programmes or United Nations Development Assistance Framework action plans.[3] Given the usual time needed to develop and finalize a United Nations Development Assistance Framework, it is reasonable to assume that most of the frameworks that came into effect in 2013 were already in an advanced form or ready for adoption at the time of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in 2012, making it impossible for them to refer to the mandates of the Conference on the mainstreaming of sustainable development. The outcome document of the

[3] Belize, Bhutan (draft), Guinea-Bissau, India, Lesotho, Liberia, Niger, Pakistan and Uganda.

Conference was not, therefore, mentioned in the documents reviewed. The Millennium Development Goals still constitute the main frame of reference for the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks.

51. Nevertheless, some United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks still succeed in capturing the core concept of sustainable development by recognizing the multidimensional nature of development challenges and the importance of multisectoral intervention. For example, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework of India emphasizes that multidimensional problems require multidisciplinary approaches. Similarly, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework of Belize states that "development challenges, including systemic conundrums and fixable problems, can be found across sector, gender, geographic, ethnic, socioeconomic and lifecycle areas and contexts".

52. The concept of sustainability appears mostly, however, in the context of the environment. Nearly all the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and the "Delivering as one" programmes refer to "sustainable economic growth" or "environmental sustainability"; many state that environmental sustainability, which is one of the five programming principles of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, is applied in developing the frameworks and programmes. For example, at the outcome level, Liberia adopts sustainable natural resources utilization as a priority. Likewise, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Lesotho has a cluster on the environment, natural resources and climate change.

53. Overall, despite of the increased recognition of the need for an integrated approach and the importance of sustainability, a major shift in the way programming is done at the country level is not being observed. Similar to strategic planning at the Headquarters level, there seem to be varying levels of understanding about sustainable development and its implications for the strategic orientations and modus operandi of the United Nations system at the country level.

54. Nearly all United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks stress the United Nations value added in terms of its advisory and capacity-building role as a neutral partner. As a result, the United Nations is well positioned to advise Governments on sustainable development policies and institutions. This must be done by exploring and building on the synergy of various United Nations entities. Moreover, efforts already under way in that regard must be stepped up.

C. Challenges for the funds, programmes and specialized agencies

55. The vision embodied in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development challenges the United Nations development system to deepen system-wide coherence. This is rendered more difficult by the way the United Nations system is organized. Each of the funds, programmes, specialized agencies and other entities of the United Nations system are still primarily vertically accountable to their respective boards, governing bodies and committees. Some degree of horizontal system-wide accountability has been achieved for operational activities at the country level, notably through the "Delivering as one" process. Recent coordination among United Nations entities in the follow-up to the quadrennial comprehensive policy review through their strategic planning is also an important move in that direction. Greater determination and innovative approaches

will be needed in order for organizations to work better together and ensure that sustainable development and integrated approaches guide the work of the United Nations system as a whole.

56. Mainstreaming sustainable development also requires a flexible workforce that is able to address development challenges from all dimensions of sustainable development. Staff capacity assessments undertaken in several programme countries show growing demand from programme country Governments for specialized policy advisory support from the United Nations system to deal with emerging global challenges. Entities should be encouraged to develop inter-organizational cooperation projects and initiatives and flexible arrangements for pooling staff, and to establish common partnership strategies for acquiring human resources with the necessary expertise for both long- and short-term assignments, which are becoming increasingly intersectoral and interdisciplinary.

57. There is also a critical need to build the capacities and skills of United Nations system staff at the country level to help Governments in adopting policy approaches that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. Training and advisory services would be needed to equip Governments. These could be provided in the form of either internal arrangements for knowledge-sharing or external technical advice.

VI. Role of quality assurance and safeguard mechanisms in supporting the promotion of sustainable development

58. The adoption of quality assurance and safeguard mechanisms is an important way to advance the integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions in the United Nations system. Such mechanisms aim to avoid, mitigate or minimize the adverse social and environmental impacts of programmes and projects and to produce positive outcomes for people and the environment. The intention is to strengthen the institutional effectiveness of each United Nations entity with a view to helping it to deliver on existing mandates and achieve sustainable results. Consequently, while such mechanisms are not about defining strategic orientations or programmatic priorities related to sustainable development, they contribute to the achievement of results that are sustainable. Pioneering work has been carried out in that regard by the World Bank Group, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and UNDP.

59. The World Bank Group and other multilateral development banks view safeguards as a mandatory framework for assessing the impact of their investment projects. Safeguards complement national policies and the World Bank also has environmental and social measures that apply to other forms of World Bank assistance. The objectives of safeguard policies are threefold: to inform decision-making; to integrate environmental and social considerations into project design; and to support public consultation and disclosure (see box 3).

Box 3
World Bank Group safeguard policies

The World Bank Group uses two policy frameworks: the safeguards framework of the World Bank, largely for the public sector; and the performance standards framework of the International Finance Corporation and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency for the private sector. The two policy frameworks share similar objectives in that the World Bank seeks to avoid, mitigate or minimize the adverse environmental and social impacts of projects, and to ensure that the projects are environmentally sound and sustainable.

The World Bank uses its convening ability, financial instruments and intellectual resources to embed its environmental and social commitment across all of its activities. The commitments range from global engagement in issues such as climate change and gender equality, to ensuring that environmental and social considerations underpin all of the World Bank's sector strategies, operational policies and country dialogue.

At the project level, the World Bank's global aspirations translate into the overarching principle that the organization will look beyond doing no harm to people and the environment to maximizing developmental opportunities for all, particularly the poor and the vulnerable, and safeguarding the well-being of all natural and living resources.

There are a range of safeguard policies ensuring that World Bank operations do not harm people or the environment. Key policies relate to, for example, carrying out environmental assessments, safeguarding natural habitats, engaging and protecting indigenous peoples, and avoiding and mitigating involuntary resettlement. The safeguard policies are currently being updated.

60. GEF recently developed minimum standards and safeguards based on those of the World Bank, with some changes, which have to be met by grantees in order to receive funding, with a view to ensuring that funds are used properly (see box 4 below). Among the core safeguard standards are the need to have environmental and social impact assessment systems in place, in addition to an accountability and grievance mechanism.

Box 4
Global Environment Facility policy on minimum environmental and social safeguards

A key GEF principle is that GEF-financed operations that achieve benefits in one area should not lead to adverse environmental or social impacts in other areas. Every effort should be made to avoid adverse impacts, and if avoidance is not feasible, they should be minimized, mitigated or offset. All implementers of GEF projects should also demonstrate sufficient dedication to sustainable development. Minimum requirements that serve as a key benchmark for the accreditation of GEF

project agencies include: conducting environmental and social impact assessments; protecting natural habitats; avoiding, minimizing or managing involuntary resettlement; and preventing adverse impacts on indigenous peoples. Other requirements relate to pest management, preserving physical cultural resources and ensuring the safety of dams.

Accountability measures and grievance systems should be designed to ensure the enforcement of policies and related systems, as well as receipt of and timely responses to complaints.

The GEF secretariat systematically assesses whether and how GEF agencies meet the relevant GEF standards and minimum requirements. GEF agencies should prove that they have sufficient implementation capacity to apply relevant policies, procedures, standards and guidelines to their projects or a clear track record of their implementation experience Of the nine GEF agencies, only one of the multilateral development banks meets all of the minimum requirements identified by GEF, while none of the five agencies of the United Nations system meets them all. All are in the process of implementing action plans to achieve compliance.

61. UNDP is also quite advanced in developing its own social and environmental standards and a related compliance review and dispute resolution process. Compliance with social and environmental standards are included as an indicator of organizational effectiveness in the integrated results and resources framework for the UNDP strategic plan for the period 2014-2017. The standards are also included as one of the seven quality criteria contained in the UNDP project-level quality assurance framework. The approach is intended to help the organization to strengthen organizational effectiveness and quality assurance to enhance the achievement of national development results (see box 5).

Box 5
United Nations Development Programme: social and environmental standards

The objectives of the draft UNDP social and environmental standards and associated accountability framework are to provide the policies, tools and systems needed to: strengthen the social and environmental outcomes of programmes and projects; avoid adverse impacts on people and the environment; minimize, mitigate and manage adverse impacts where avoidance is not possible; strengthen capacities for managing social and environmental risks; and address complaints from project-affected people. At the heart of the standards are the three normative United Nations Development Group principles: a human-rights based approach, gender equality and environmental sustainability. The cross-cutting principles provide the foundation for a set of project-level standards that include:

- Biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource management
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Community health, safety and working conditions
- Cultural heritage
- Displacement and resettlement
- Indigenous peoples
- Pollution prevention and resource efficiency

The proposed standards also outline a policy delivery process that includes screening, assessment, management, stakeholder engagement, dispute resolution, access to information, monitoring, reporting and compliance.

The standards will be underpinned by a social and environmental compliance review process to respond to claims of non-compliance by UNDP with applicable environmental and social policies; and a dispute resolution process to ensure that individuals, peoples and communities affected by UNDP projects have access to appropriate dispute resolution procedures for hearing and addressing project-related disputes.

62. It is anticipated that additional global funds, such as the Green Climate Fund, would also require that some form of fiduciary standards or safeguards be in place for their grantees.

63. Several United Nations entities are thus embarking on efforts to introduce social and environmental safeguards and standards. In order to help to ensure increased coordination and coherence, the Environment Management Group is currently elaborating guidance for United Nations system agencies — building on existing practice and lessons learned within the system — on how to implement the framework for advancing environmental and social sustainability (see para. 29 above). One of the key benefits of that process has been the opportunity to strengthen the network of professionals across the United Nations system working on environmental and, to some extent, social sustainability issues, and to provide a mechanism to exchange best practices and lessons learned.

VII. Role of inspections and independent evaluations

64. Independent evaluations and inspections have an important role to play in the process of mainstreaming the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in the United Nations development system. Evaluations can also help national Governments in developing improved policy approaches in support of the implementation of sustainable development goals. Recently, the United Nations system has been making increased efforts to link the communities involved in evaluations to those engaged in mainstreaming sustainable development.

65. While accountability systems have traditionally been mostly vertical within individual development agencies, United Nations system organizations are increasingly undertaking joint approaches. Collaborative approaches to evaluation help to instil a sense of horizontal mutual accountability for results and build coherence at the system level, and can help address important knowledge gaps — all of which can help better integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. Such approaches are also an important tool for informing United Nations reform initiatives and high-level policy discussions (see box 6).

Box 6
Examples of joint evaluations

The ongoing joint evaluation of joint gender programmes in the United Nations system is intended to provide credible and useful evaluative information on the added value and worth of joint gender programmes in the United Nations system. It also aims to identify key lessons learned, challenges and best practices related to joint gender programmes, with a view to improving those programmes. Ultimately, the evaluation aims to support future policy and guidance on the design, implementation and evaluation of joint gender programmes, and enhance the contribution of the United Nations system to advancing gender equality at the country level. Eight organizations are engaged in the evaluation.

UNEP, FAO and UNDP are conducting a joint evaluation of the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD programme). The joint evaluation is intended to make a broad and representative assessment of the programme's performance in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and, to the extent possible, impact.

66. Important advances are expected to result from the 2012 quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. In its resolution 67/226, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to establish an interim coordination mechanism for system-wide evaluation of operational activities for development of the United Nations system composed of the Joint Inspection Unit, the United Nations Evaluation Group, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

67. The interim coordination mechanism is intended to support system-wide coherence and to progressively enable the assessment of whether the United Nations system is efficiently and effectively responding to global, regional and country level needs and priorities, and achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. The focus will be on, in particular, programmatic and operational synergies between different parts of the United Nations system. The purpose is to enhance accountability and learning to inform strategy and policy development. The interim coordination mechanism would be

ideally suited to evaluating whether the United Nations system is mainstreaming the three dimensions of sustainable development in specific areas of its work.

68. The General Assembly also recently adopted a new policy for independent system-wide evaluation of United Nations operational activities for development (resolution 68/229, para. 8). In that regard, it decided that two pilot evaluations would be conducted in 2014 on: meta-evaluation and synthesis of United Nations Development Assistance Framework evaluations, with a particular focus on poverty eradication; and evaluation of the contribution of the United Nations development system to strengthening national capacities for statistical analysis and data collection to support the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals". The interim coordination mechanism will be used to oversee the pilot evaluations and report on lessons learned. This will be an important opportunity to evaluate a sustainable development perspective.

69. In a few years, Member States may decide to review progress made by the United Nations system in integrating economic, social and environmental dimensions in its work. To prepare the ground for such evaluations, it is important that benchmarks and indicators are set up early. This would apply not only to specific programmes or policies, but also to a system-wide action plan or framework for mainstreaming sustainable development, should it be decided to develop one.

VIII. Conclusions and recommendations

70. Strengths, challenges and gaps identified in the 2013 report of the Secretary-General report remain relevant to the current discussion on mainstreaming the three dimensions of sustainable development. Although a more integrated approach is needed, supported by several coordination mechanisms and good practices, obstacles and challenges persist. These include unclear and inconsistent terminology, sectoral silos, imbalances among the three dimensions, a lack of impact assessment processes and mechanisms, and resource constraints.

71. One of the most important developments since the previous report has been the inauguration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development. The forum will give impetus to integrating sustainable development as an overarching framework for all United Nations system intergovernmental bodies and organizations. The forum will, like the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, require support from the United Nations system to bring further conceptual clarity to the mainstreaming approach and to identify subsequent implications for mandates, plans and implementation modalities.

72. While there has been some progress in updating the strategic plans of the funds, programmes and agencies to reflect the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in 2012, more work remains to be done to mainstream sustainable development in United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and the "Delivering as one" programmes at the country level. Progress may be expected as a result of further inter-agency collaboration with the High-level Committee on Programmes, the High-level Committee on Management and the United Nations Development Group. Also important is the ongoing work by CEB and its high-level committees in developing a set of options on how best the United Nations system can support Member States as the

international community strives to transition to a new, universal development agenda centred on sustainable development, including implementation at the country level.

73. Work undertaken in developing quality assurance and safeguard mechanisms, and in the area of joint evaluations, has been promising. It should catalyse more action towards system-wide monitoring and harmonized reporting. Additional safeguard policies should be adopted by a number of other global funds.

74. Beyond operational activities, intellectual leadership is crucial to addressing the systemic issues and shortcomings in development theory and practice that have reinforced unsustainable development paths. In that regard, organizational culture and mindset changes are needed to produce the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches and collaboration needed to advance understanding and support countries in the design of their own national strategies.

75. It is recommended that Member States:

(a) Welcome efforts by CEB to continue promoting policy coherence and system-wide coordination for accelerating the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in the work of the United Nations system;

(b) Call upon the United Nations system to accelerate efforts to mainstream sustainable development into strategic plans and programmes at the country level;

(c) Encourage efforts by the United Nations Evaluation Group to study how evaluation can best contribute to mainstreaming sustainable development in the work of the United Nations system;

(d) Call upon the United Nations system to establish a common repository of environmental and social assessments and related lessons learned;

(e) Encourage individual United Nations system organizations to champion the mainstreaming of economic, social and environmental dimensions, thus experimenting with new approaches and driving progress;

(f) Request the Secretary-General to report back on progress to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council and to the high-level political forum on sustainable development, in consultation with the United Nations system.

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High-level segment: thematic discussion

Effective governance, policymaking and planning for sustainable urbanization

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In its resolution 61/16, the General Assembly decided that the Economic and Social Council should hold a thematic discussion during its substantive session and that it should continue to promote global dialogue by holding a discussion on a theme from the economic, social and related fields to be decided by the Council and informed by a report of the Secretary-General. Pursuant to that mandate, the Council decided that the focus of the thematic discussion for 2014 should be "Effective governance, policymaking and planning for sustainable urbanization". The theme addresses the increasing contribution made by urban management to sustainable urbanization. The thematic discussion, which will take place during the integration segment, will be guided by the present report.

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I. Introduction

1. As urban areas are home to a growing majority of the global population, cities in diverse regional and political contexts have become hubs for ideas, commerce, culture, science, innovation, productivity, social development and much more. At their best, large cities and urban areas have provided unprecedented access to opportunities and services and enabled people to advance socially and economically.

2. Many cities are already struggling to meet the development needs of the world's growing urban population, which is expected to reach 6.25 billion in 2050.[1] Of that total, 73 per cent is expected to reside in developing regions in Africa and Asia.[2] Cities face challenges in terms of providing adequate social services, job opportunities and security without straining the urban infrastructure and imposing unsustainable demands on local and global natural resources and systems. Common urban challenges include congestion, pollution, access to energy, provision of basic services, adequate housing, infrastructure maintenance, crime and security, environmental degradation and natural disasters.

3. Policy, planning and management approaches that can effectively deal with the conflicts and contradictions of modern urban living are critical to addressing these challenges in ways that allow cities to continue to thrive and grow sustainably, enhance citizen security and promote resilience to environmental and other disasters. Efforts should be made to help maximize the socioeconomic benefits of contemporary urbanization processes and reduce the threats that such processes pose to sustainable development. Doing so will be even more critical in the light of pressing urbanization trends.

4. While current models have made some headway in this regard, issues of fragmented decision-making, conflicting policy targets and insufficient coordination among city stakeholders continue to present obstacles to a more effective and sustainable management of rapidly changing urban areas.

5. Urban governance and management systems that can efficiently manage these new territorial realities will need to address such issues while taking into account the specific and diverse sustainability challenges faced by cities at different stages of development.

6. The present report explores the role of urban governance, policies and planning tools in addressing urban challenges. It presents some models and approaches that have been among the most successful in promoting a balanced and integrated approach to the management of economic, social and environmental dimensions of urban living. The report also contains an analysis of the efficacy of these approaches in enhancing policy coordination among different tiers of government in order to address competing policy objectives and increase synergies between strategies at the local and national levels. Finally, recommendations are provided for future governance frameworks for sustainable cities, with a focus on specific future requirements for urban planning and governance.

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[1] *World Economic and Social Survey 2013* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.13.II.C.1).

[2] United Nations, *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2014 Revision* (forthcoming).

II. Assessing governance, planning and management instruments for promoting urban sustainability

7. The concept of governance recognizes that power exists inside and outside the formal authority and institutions of government and that decisions are made on the basis of complex relationships between many actors with different priorities. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) defines urban governance as follows:

> Urban governance is the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, plan and manage the common affairs of the city. It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and cooperative action can be taken. It includes formal institutions as well as informal arrangements and the social capital of citizens.[3]

8. The concept of urban governance has emerged in response to the increasing complexity and diversity of issues posed by rapid urban growth, whose scope and impacts can no longer be addressed by municipal governments alone. Rapid urban growth, together with accelerating globalization trends, has brought about profound changes to the urban environment and its dynamics. Changes have occurred to the very role, spatial identity and impact of cities, which now go beyond their territorial boundaries and beyond the responsibilities and capacities of local governments. Managing urban growth has thus increased both in scope and complexity, posing important challenges to urban sustainability.

9. The terms "urban sustainability" and "sustainable cities" are used to refer to cities and urban areas that have been able to integrate social and economic development with environmental management and urban governance.[1,4] The term "sustainable urbanization" is used to define a dynamic process aimed at achieving these sustainability conditions for present and future generations by addressing environmental, economic, social and governance concerns.[5,6] As the urbanization process evolves, urban policymakers and planners, especially in developing countries, are increasingly confronted with challenges encompassing demographic, socioeconomic, environmental and institutional dimensions.

10. The speed and sheer scale of urban transformation presents formidable challenges, especially for developing countries. Rapid urban growth in the developing world is seriously outstripping the capacity of most cities to provide adequate public services, jobs and environmental protection to its citizens. Available data suggest that in a large number of the world's poorest countries, the proportion of urban poor is increasing faster than the overall rate of urban population growth. An estimated 72 per cent of the urban population of Africa now lives in slums. That proportion is 43 per cent for Asia and the Pacific, 32 per cent for Latin America and

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[3] UN-Habitat, "The Global Campaign on Urban Governance: concept paper", 2nd ed. (Nairobi, 2002).

[4] UN-Habitat and Department for International Development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, "Sustainable urbanization: achieving Agenda 21" (Nairobi, 2002).

[5] Manoj Roy, "Planning for sustainable urbanization in fast growing cities: mitigation and adaptation issues addressed in Dhaka, Bangladesh", *Habitat International*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (2009), pp. 276-286.

[6] Li-Yin Shen and others, "The application of urban sustainability indicators: a comparison between various practices", *Habitat International*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (2011), pp. 17-29.

30 per cent for the Middle East and North Africa.[7] Yet, each year cities attract new migrants who, together with the increasing native population, expand the number of squatter settlements and shanty towns, exacerbating the problems of urban congestion and sprawl and hampering local authorities' attempts to improve basic infrastructure and deliver essential services. This problem is even more severe in parts of the world where cities have been growing without a concomitant expansion of economic activity.

11. Because the bulk of economic activity is centred in cities, urban residents are also more exposed to both the benefits and risks of globalization, such as the instability of financial and labour markets. Globalization and economic transformation have affected urban settlements in various ways. Particularly significant has been the impact on the urban labour market, which has seen a growing polarization of occupational and income structures and hence increased income inequality caused by growth in the service sector and decline in manufacturing. Local authorities are increasingly faced with a diverse and fragmented social fabric, the components of which have varied expectations and interests, as well as a changing balance of power and networks that favour investors as cities become more market-driven and better integrated into the national and global economy.

12. Current patterns of production and consumption also pose considerable risks to natural resources in and around cities, as well as to health, for example by increasing pollution, congestion and unsafe living conditions. Cities contribute to more than half of the world's total greenhouse gas emissions, largely because of their concentrated industrial production and construction activities and because of their high dependence on fossil fuels for energy. Moreover, cities are often highly vulnerable to natural and other disasters owing to the inadequate physical conditions of buildings and infrastructure, the high concentration of people and the lack of institutional capacities to mitigate and prevent disasters.

13. Urban policymakers and planners are also increasingly confronted with new spatial forms and processes of human settlements, the drivers of which often lie outside the control of local government. Socio-spatial change seems to have taken place primarily in the direction of fragmentation, separation and specialization of functions and uses within cities, with labour market polarization and inequality reflected in growing differences between wealthier and poorer areas in both developed and developing countries. In many poorer cities, spatial forms are largely driven by the efforts of low-income households to secure land that is affordable and in a location close to employment and other livelihood sources. This process is leading to entirely new urban forms, as the countryside itself begins to urbanize. The bulk of urban growth in developing countries is, in fact, now taking place in unplanned, peri-urban areas, as poor urban dwellers look for a foothold in the cities and towns, where land is more easily available, where they can escape the costs and threats of urban land regulations and where there is a possibility of combining urban and rural livelihoods.

14. Finding a balance between all these dimensions and challenges puts considerable pressure on the administrative, organizational and financial capacities of local authorities, especially in small and medium-sized cities in developing

[7] Barney Cohen, "Urbanization in developing countries: current trends, future projections and key challenges for sustainability", *Technology in Society*, Vol., 28, Nos. 1-2 (January-April 2006), pp. 63-80.

countries that often lack the necessary capacities to deal with this complexity. In most countries, one of the most difficult challenges is cooperation among different tiers of government and across sectors, particularly at the local (urban) level, to ensure policy coherence. Active cooperation among entities operating in various disciplines and among stakeholders is required, as are policy and planning dimensions that include land use, transportation, local economic development, environmental justice and urban design.[5]

15. Governments around the world have implemented a wide variety of initiatives and solutions, often in partnership with other stakeholders, to tackle these issues and find viable solutions. Current experiences, including local Agenda 21, while showing some success in addressing critical social and environmental areas, also highlight a number of structural barriers to more effective and sustainable urban management. Among the most critical of these barriers are the limited integration of approaches, institutions and actors in the development and environmental fields; political and institutional context and decision-making processes that do not facilitate horizontal and vertical cooperation and integration between different tiers of government to reconcile competing policy objectives and devise effective sustainable development interventions; and the limited roles, capacities and resources for local authorities and their partners to create more sustainable patterns of urban development.

16. For urban governance models and planning tools to be effective, it will be necessary to recognize the complexity and scope of current urban transformation and to translate such knowledge into innovative strategies, procedures and instruments to mobilize, manage and coordinate the efforts, capacities and resources of a wide range of urban stakeholders and actors to promote sustainable urbanization.

III. Emerging models for sustainable urbanization

17. Cities and urban areas around the world have been experimenting with a variety of governance models and planning tools to drive changing urban dynamics and build more sustainable cities. The adoption of a specific governance model is generally the outcome of negotiations between multiple urban actors to resolve conflicts and reconcile diverging interests and objectives. Thus, different governance models reflect different solutions to a given city's unique political, economic, social and geographical circumstances and priorities. While there is no clear taxonomy of urban governance models, from current city experiences a few categories are emerging that emphasize different relations between public institutions and between those institutions and non-State actors in the planning and management of urban areas.

Mayor-city council models

18. At the core of mayor-city council models[8] is the public influence on urban development and the perception of the city as a collective identity, administratively

[8] Iván Tosics, "Governance challenges and models for the cities of tomorrow", issue paper prepared for the European Commission (January 2011). Available from http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/studies/pdf/citiesoftomorrow/citiesoftomorrow_governance.pdf.

defined. The local government has a strong command on the social, economic and spatial development of the city. Governance systems following these models tend to have strong local leadership, generally a statutory governing body of directly elected representatives, including the leader. These are empowered with legislative authority to levy and collect taxes, manage financial resources and provide a variety of services to citizens. A key characteristic of these models is that the leader, most often a mayor, enjoys a high degree of legitimacy, owing to the elected nature of the office. The leader thus has the authority and capacity to effectively manage and change the very nature of the city. This is the case in many cities and city States worldwide, such as London and Singapore, where local governments have legal control over land use and social and spatial urban development and have been able to implement far-reaching measures and reforms. In Singapore, the highly centralized public sector has allowed the city State to forge ahead with the use of innovative urban planning and technological and governance approaches to build efficient and sustainable infrastructure.

Inter-municipal or regional models

19. Inter-municipal or regional models[9] are intended to manage a territorial reality that is much larger than the administrative city, as in the case of large and evolving metropolitan areas and capital cities. It can be structured around forms of voluntary or mandatory collaboration between local authorities, such as city councils or regional boards, that interact with the city government on issues of interest to their constituencies. The purpose of these governing structures is to provide flexible cooperation and decision-making mechanisms to manage spatial and socioeconomic planning and public service delivery across the city-region. Some deal with multiple issues — ranging from land use, housing and development planning to social services, technical services and infrastructure — and involve multiple stakeholders — including municipalities, counties, special districts, school districts and soil and water conservation districts. The city-region of Amsterdam, for example, is a voluntary ad hoc partnership of mayors and aldermen that works with all three levels of government in the Amsterdam region of The Netherlands. The partnership involves 16 municipalities working together in the spheres of social development, traffic and transport, economic affairs, housing and youth welfare, focusing on direct results for participating municipalities in the form of improvements to the quality of life, accessibility and economic development.

20. Some versions of these models also provide for the participation of local communities, non-governmental organizations and the private sector to monitor and give feedback on public service delivery in their specific area. For example, in Mexico City political and administrative districts (*delegaciones*) are involved in the implementation of "Plan Verde", a 15-year plan aimed at improving urban living standards without damaging local natural resources through land conservation, the enhancing of habitability and public spaces, water, transportation, clean air, waste management and the reduction of greenhouse gasses. The involvement of political and administrative districts means that citizens can participate in monitoring the implementation of the plan in their areas.

[9] City-Region Studies Centre, "Regional governance models: an exploration of structures and critical practices" (University of Alberta, Canada, October 2007). Available from www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/documents/Regional_Governance_Models_An_exploration_of_structures.pdf.

Centralized models

21. In centralized models, the responsibility for urban development is centralized and implemented through a hierarchical system of governance. Countries, especially in emerging economies, have relied on centralized models of urban governance to implement their national strategies for economic transformation, as in the case of the New Economic Policy in Malaysia in the 1970s and 1980s. Under these models, the national Government plays a central role in urban management and planning. Urban governance is an integral part of the national development strategy and often includes building the capabilities of local governments nationwide to ensure efficient urban governance delivery. This approach often focuses on inclusive partnerships between the private and the public sectors, as well as civil society, to achieve national development objectives and promote joint accountability for efficient urban governance delivery systems.

22. Centralized urban governance models are characterized by different degrees of devolution of powers to local authorities for urban management. In one analysis of devolution processes in Brazil, China, India, Mexico and the United States of America, and countries of the European Union, it was found that although national Governments would prefer to devolve authority to their regional or state governments with as few accompanying resources as possible, the subnational government would prefer the opposite, suggesting that the balance of power between these two extremes depends on the relative legitimacy of the two tiers of government, which is likely to affect their overall effectiveness in addressing urban affairs.[10]

Laissez-faire models

23. Laissez-faire models promote minimal State intervention in city planning and management and the delegation of a leadership role in urban development and land use to market forces. These models came to the fore during the 1980s and 1990s, when regulation and planning fell from grace, especially regarding land use. A key characteristic of these models is the deregulation of the housing and urban land markets with different implications for urban growth and land prices, depending on the degree of land deregulation and accompanying policies to address their social and environmental impacts. For example, in 1979 the Government of Chile started implementing deregulation policies that resulted in the virtual elimination of urban growth boundaries, which in turn changed the morphology and structure of Chilean cities. Those policies were accompanied by urban policies that explicitly aimed to improve access to housing for the poor, while the State maintained the planning authority to designate sensitive areas for environmental protection. Some argue that the spatial segregation impacts of such policies have imposed a high toll on society by indirectly lowering the quality of life, impeding access to jobs and aggravating social alienation. Common issues associated with land deregulation policies have been urban sprawl, increasing traffic congestion, air pollution and the formation of ill-equipped, socially and economically segregated low-income neighbourhoods, which can become a breeding ground for social problems such as drug addiction, juvenile delinquency, youth apathy and alienation.

[10] Andreas Rodriguez-Pose and Nicholas Gill, "The global trend towards devolution and its implications", *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (2003), pp. 333-351.

24. The debate on laissez-faire models, however, remains polarized between those who believe that the aforementioned problems emerge and persist because land markets have never been sufficiently deregulated and those who believe that liberalization has gone too far in its market-based approach, leaving many problems unsolved — including with regard to the increase in land prices; the quality and durability of housing; the conditions under which land is serviced; social problems associated with urban poverty; and problems of efficiency and equity derived from the growth patterns of cities, such as the mismatch between areas where services are provided and the locations chosen for private developments.

Participatory models

25. Participatory models imply a municipal decision-making process that is characterized by participation, responsiveness, transparency and accountability. They rely on governance systems based on formal and informal civic involvement to define urban priorities and strategies, drawing on the resources, experiences and capacities of various actors to complement the capacity of the municipality. This approach is intended to promote strategies that are based on a city's specific capacities and pressing challenges and to ensure sound resource allocation, management and accountability. In Brazil, for example, federal law requires the formulation of a "participative master plan" highlighting the urban strategy and policies of all cities with more than 20,000 inhabitants, as a precondition for receiving federal funds. The plan is elaborated on the basis of public inquiries into the city's present conditions and development prospects and of consultations with local groups on thematic and territorial issues. The outcome of the consultations forms the basis of the city's proposed urban master plan, which is submitted for approval by the legislative authority of the municipality. In Mexico City a similar approach has been adopted for the implementation of several lines of action of the city's 15-year plan for sustainable development (see para. 20 above). For the implementation of the plan, several intersectoral ministries of the local government were involved in the formulation of strategies and goals and more than 13 organs of the public administration were involved in the delivery of the plan's goals through 16 political and administrative districts of the city. The plan includes specific provisions on citizens' involvement in the surveillance of water leaks, the creation of green spaces on building rooftops, the sorting of garbage and the use of public transportation and solar heaters.

Integrated models

26. Integration can be both horizontal, between policy sectors (different departments), and vertical, between different tiers of government, as well as go beyond administrative boundaries, between city administration and civil society. It is intended to promote synergies and win-win solutions between sectors, thus maximizing effectiveness in terms of policy and service delivery. The implementation of integrated models requires new governance structures that reflect a hierarchy of approaches for cooperation, coordination and policy coherence. A few cities have adopted some elements of such models. The city of Berlin, for example, introduced an integrated approach to urban development policy, involving actors and stakeholders of all kinds, as early as the end of the 1990s. The so-called "socially integrative city" (*Soziale Stadt*) programme was implemented in order to improve living and housing conditions, and also to support the economic basis of

Berlin's districts. The strategy involves cross-departmental cooperation and an integrated action plan for setting up new structures in directing neighbourhood management operations. The concept of "neighbourhood management" (*Quartiersmanagement*) enables cooperation between all relevant actors and stakeholders, thus extending the scope of local policies.

27. So far, integrated approaches have been applied to infrastructure and facilities for public transport, health care, renewable energy, education, housing, green areas, waste and recycling. The Brazilian city of Curitiba, for example, applied an integrated approach to the sustainable management of solid waste that was implemented through a series of programmes integrating environmental improvement with social inclusion. Integrated urban policies and planning tools to achieve urban sustainability are also being applied within sectors such as public transport, housing and green areas. The integration and coordination of different infrastructures and modes of public transportation can indeed save travel time and reduce congestion and carbon emissions. The designation and protection of green belts can help reduce carbon emissions and support urban agriculture; in turn, this can provide employment to local farmers, bring fresh produce to urban residents and stabilize food prices by reducing the cost of transportation and packaging. Success in applying these measures has been reported in cities like Freiburg (Germany), Copenhagen, Paris, Bangkok, Singapore and Mexico City.

IV. Lessons learned from the implementation of different urban governance models to address sustainability challenges

28. The UN-Habitat global campaign on good urban governance has focused on seven principles, namely: sustainability, subsidiarity, equity, efficiency, transparency and accountability, civic engagement and citizenship, and security. Good governance is critical to managing cities of all sizes and at all stages of development, no matter the geographical or political context. But while the concept of good governance applies to all types of cities, there is no universal template for its implementation. What is good governance is determined by each city's specific circumstances, complexities, priorities and values. A variety of urban governance models and planning tools has emerged around the world to deal with the challenges of rapid urban transformation; they have had different degrees of success in terms of urban sustainability.

29. Regardless of the specific characteristics and nature of urban governance models, a number of lessons can be drawn from current experiences regarding the features of a future governance framework for sustainable cities. These experiences seem to point to the following key enablers for effective, sustainable urban management: strong leadership of local authorities; broad-based participatory mechanisms and processes for civic engagement; strong public-private partnerships; and, most importantly, alignment of national and local government policy objectives and interventions.

Leadership of local authorities

30. Local authorities, as the main agencies responsible for urban management, have a key role to play in bringing together urban leaders and facilitating the emergence of a vision for urban sustainability. They can also facilitate the use of innovative management and administration systems and practices, including by promoting the use of technology to reduce costs and increase efficiency in all aspects of urban planning, development and management. Urban governance models and planning tools inspired by strong local leadership have been most successful in promoting urban sustainability when local authorities have done the following: (a) undertaken broad-based consultations with government departments, stakeholders and communities involved in urban management to build a strategic vision focused on the well-being of all citizens; (b) engaged in consultative processes such as environmental planning and management geared to reach agreement on acceptable levels of resource use and needs; (c) promoted inclusiveness by ensuring more equitable access to decision-making processes, resources and basic services; (d) created fair and predictable regulatory frameworks that address the aspirations and interests of all community groups; (e) acted as honest brokers for the benefit of all citizens; (f) ensured private sector accountability towards common urban objectives that address the interests of all groups; (g) promoted transparent and effective decision-making and delivery systems to guarantee the rights of all individuals; (h) ensured financial viability through the participation of all citizens in the economic life of the city; and (i) assumed the role of innovators, communicators and trendsetters to steer urban management towards a sustainable path.

Participatory mechanisms and processes for civic engagement

31. Addressing economic, social and environmental challenges and finding effective, sustainable and financially sound solutions requires the involvement and contribution of all urban actors. Citizens are both stakeholders and the principal wealth of cities. They are the beneficiaries and the means to achieve sustainable solutions. Citizen engagement in decision-making processes is critical to tap into the capacity and resources of urban communities to promote effective solutions to urban challenges. Urban governance models and planning tools have been most effective and sustainable when they have relied on inclusive decision-making processes to formulate strategies and policies.

32. Inclusive and participatory consultations can promote a greater sense of ownership and commitment by a diverse group of urban actors. They can also lead to better integration of the social, economic and environmental protection perspectives and thus harness synergies and efficiencies among public transportation, energy consumption, biodiversity and human health, among others, to generate better complementarities and results. They can encourage local authorities to be more transparent and accountable towards their citizens, particularly with respect to participatory budgeting, transparent tendering and procurement, and public feedback mechanisms such as ombudsman services.

Public-private partnerships

33. Local authorities face mounting pressures to create employment and provide affordable housing, adequate infrastructure, public services and environmental

protection measures to ensure urban sustainability. Building sustainable cities requires major investments in safe water and electricity delivery systems, reliable, affordable and clean transportation, and improved waste and recycle systems. The role of private investment is essential to ensure adequate investment in infrastructure and services, create jobs, increase efficiency and promote overall economic competitiveness. Private sector objectives and incentives, however, are not always aligned with broad sustainability goals.

34. A strong public-private partnership is critical for ensuring that the private sector invests in priority areas that address the pressing challenges of cities, as determined by each specific socioeconomic context. Urban governance models that have been most effective in engaging the private sector to achieve urban sustainability have been able to connect relevant public and private actors through various coordination mechanisms, including self-organizing networks. Updated urban administration and management legislation has been used to promote consultative processes involving the private sector in sustainable investment planning and management programmes. This has helped channel private resources into urban investments.

Alignment of national and local government objectives

35. National sustainable development plans should be able to harness local resources and support institutional building and development objectives by directing investments to priority needs. This requires policy coherence between different tiers of government, as well as adequate resource allocation and capacity and institutional development at the municipal level to implement national urban policies. Urban governance models that have been most effective in this regard have relied on clear constitutional frameworks for assigning responsibilities between local, provincial, municipal and national levels. Transparent and predictable intergovernmental fiscal transfers and central government support for the development of administrative, technical and managerial capacity at the city level are also imperative. Similarly, systems of vertical and horizontal financial equalization to protect financially weaker local authorities have to be put in place.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

36. At the core of sustainable urban management is a balanced approach to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of urban transformation to ensure that the priorities and needs of present and future generations are protected. Urban governance and urban planning are increasingly being considered as important tools to address urban challenges and achieve well-managed and sustainable cities.

37. But cities also continue to struggle with limited resources, policy coordination problems with higher tiers of government and competing policy objectives. Rapid urbanization is exacerbating these problems as the scope of city activities and their impact is widening beyond their territorial boundaries. This transformation is posing new and more complex challenges to urban sustainability and management.

38. In order to be effective, urban governance models, policies and planning tools should recognize and address the widening scope and impact of urban activities across policy areas and spatial boundaries, and involve an increasing number of urban stakeholders and actors. They also need to be strategic, participatory and

action-oriented, based not solely on an assessment of the physical aspects of the city but also on its social, economic and environmental strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. With this in mind, the following policy initiatives should be considered:

- A whole-of-government approach should be applied to address complex urban challenges more holistically and to be able to identify policy trade-offs and synergies within different activities. This could be done by creating and managing urban systems and mechanisms to balance different priorities through an integrated approach to economic, social and environmental dimensions.
- Inclusive, participatory mechanisms for decision-making should be established to ensure that the needs of all social groups are taken into account in setting urban priorities.
- Inclusive mechanisms should monitor the implementation of urban priorities and related initiatives and hold politicians accountable.
- Strong partnerships should be forged with the private sector and other civil society organizations to harness the strengths, capacities and commitment of these stakeholders. Their role in the implementation of urban strategies and the effective delivery of public services should be clearly defined.
- Effective coordination between national and local interventions should be pursued to ensure coherence in broad policy objectives and efficiency in resource use.
- A clear division of responsibilities between local authorities and between local and national authorities should be pursued to promote strong leadership and accountability in the delivery of public services.
- Effective consultative mechanisms should be established to engage the broad range of urban stakeholders and actors involved in service delivery to ensure that economic, social and environmental dimensions are fully integrated.
- Innovative procedures and approaches, including through new technologies, should be pursued to address capacity gaps and promote more effective decision-making and delivery of services.

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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

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Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance

Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/182, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report annually to the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance. The report is also submitted in response to Assembly resolution 68/102 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2013/6. The period covered by the report is January to December 2013.

The report describes the major humanitarian trends and challenges over the past year and analyses a number of thematic issues, including reducing vulnerability and managing risk; transformation through innovation; serving the needs of people in conflict; and humanitarian effectiveness. The report provides an overview of current efforts to improve humanitarian coordination and response and provides recommendations for further improvement.

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I. Introduction

1. Throughout 2013, the United Nations and its partners continued to face major challenges in responding to humanitarian needs generated by conflicts and natural disasters throughout the world. By the end of 2013, the number of people internally displaced by armed conflict and generalized violence had increased to over 33.2 million, the highest figure recorded by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. Although an estimated 1 million people were able to return home in 2013, over 8.1 million were newly displaced.[1] The number of people fleeing their homes across borders also continued to increase dramatically. In mid-2013, the global refugee population stood at 11.1 million, 600,000 higher than six months earlier, and the figure was considered likely to increase.[2]

2. The Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters recorded 334 natural disasters in 2013, which claimed an estimated 22,600 lives, affected 97 million people and caused over US$ 118 billion in damages. Asia continued to be the region most impacted by natural disasters, with almost half (160) of the disasters occurring in the region, accounting for 88 per cent of the number of people killed.

3. The scale of needs in 2013 and the outlook for 2014 continue the upward trend of the last decade. In 2014, 52 million people will be targeted to receive international humanitarian assistance through the inter-agency appeal process and a record $15.6 billion will be requested for humanitarian action in 25 countries. These increasing needs, the international community's collective inability to resolve protracted crises and the convergence of various global challenges have severely hindered the operational and financial capacity of Governments and humanitarian organizations to respond adequately.

4. This underscores the need to change the way Member States, the United Nations and its partners, affected communities and first responders, the private sector, diaspora organizations and other civil society groups collaborate, coordinate and prepare for and respond to humanitarian crises. The process leading up to the World Humanitarian Summit will provide an opportunity for all relevant stakeholders to consider how the international community can better respond to humanitarian situations and what more can be done to prevent them from occurring in the future.

II. Overview of humanitarian emergencies

A. Complex emergencies

5. In the Middle East region, the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic continued to deteriorate rapidly. By the end of the reporting period, the number of people in need had risen to 9.3 million, including 6.5 million internally displaced persons. At least another 2.3 million people had sought refuge in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, as well as Egypt and other countries, creating significant pressure on the economic and social sectors of those countries and on the

[1] Data on disaster-induced displacement for 2013 were not available at the time of submission of the report.

[2] End-of-year data for 2013 were not available at the time of submission of the report.

communities that host many of the refugees. The situation is particularly dire for millions of people living in hard-to-access and besieged areas, many of whom have not been reached with assistance for over a year.

6. In Yemen, sectarian and inter-tribal fighting continued to create displacement and limit returns. In October 2013, new fighting erupted in northern Yemen, where about 300,000 people continued to live in protracted displacement with limited prospects of returning to their areas of origin. In the south, almost all those displaced by the 2011-2012 conflict in Abyan — about 162,000 — have returned home, but face persistent security challenges.

7. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the humanitarian situation continued to deteriorate in 2013. The number of people displaced by demolitions or evictions in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, increased from 886 in 2012 to 1,103 in 2013. Despite some adjustments made by the Israeli authorities in recent years, the blockade on the Gaza Strip continues to cause high levels of unemployment and food insecurity, leaving the majority of people in Gaza dependent on aid. Extremely limited movement of people in and out of Gaza through the Erez and Rafah crossings continued to affect the civilian population, including patients awaiting medical treatment.

8. The reporting period also saw the intensification of a number of conflicts in Africa. The security and humanitarian situation in the Central African Republic deteriorated significantly in December 2013 when renewed fighting between ex-Seleka and anti-Balaka elements deteriorated into generalized inter-communal violence. An estimated 2.3 million people, more than half the country's population, are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. By the end of the reporting period, almost 1 million people had been displaced.

9. In South Sudan, 1 million people faced acute food insecurity caused by displacement resulting from inter-communal violence as well as seasonal flooding. The eruption of violence in Juba in December 2013 and the subsequent sharp deterioration of the security situation increased humanitarian needs and displaced hundreds of thousands of people both within South Sudan and into neighbouring countries. By the end of 2013, South Sudan also hosted some 220,000 refugees and had absorbed some 1.9 million returnees since 2007.

10. In the Sudan, inter-tribal conflict and sporadic clashes in Darfur displaced close to 400,000 people, bringing the total number of the internally displaced in Darfur to over 2 million. The humanitarian operating environment in Darfur remained extremely challenging owing to insecurity, access constraints and reduced funding. Humanitarian partners could not reach an estimated 800,000 people in areas controlled by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States from within the Sudan. In addition, over half a million Sudanese remained in refugee camps in Chad, Ethiopia and South Sudan.

11. In Mali, 3 million people were affected by food insecurity by the end of 2013. Approximately 137,000 displaced people returned to the north despite prevailing insecurity, inter-ethnic violence, food scarcity and the lack of basic social services. At the end of 2013, there were more than 254,800 internally displaced persons in Mali and over 167,700 Malian refugees in Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger.

12. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, at the end of 2013 there were nearly 3 million internally displaced persons — many displaced multiple times. Almost

430,000 Congolese were living as refugees and asylum seekers in neighbouring countries, while the Democratic Republic of the Congo itself continued to host some 260,000 refugees, including over 65,000 people arriving from the Central African Republic since December 2012. Food insecurity affected 6.7 million people and half of the children under the age of 5 remained chronically malnourished, including in more peaceful areas of the country.

13. In Somalia, for the first time in five years and despite ongoing fighting in some parts of the country, the number of people in need of life-saving assistance decreased — from over 1 million to 857,000 — reflecting modest gains in food security. However, some 2 million people continue to live on the verge of food and nutrition insecurity and require support. Malnutrition rates remain among the highest in the world, with one in seven children under the age of 5 estimated to be acutely malnourished. An estimated 1.1 million people are internally displaced and nearly 1 million Somalis continue to live in neighbouring countries as refugees.

14. In the Asia-Pacific region, inter-communal tensions and violence spread in Myanmar from Rakhine State to other areas of the country, most notably to Meiktila, where 44 people were killed and over 12,000 displaced in March 2013. Over 140,000 people remain displaced in Rakhine State, and 100,000 people in Kachin following renewed clashes in October-November and continuing difficulty in accessing areas beyond the Government's control.

15. In Afghanistan, more than 124,000 people were newly displaced in 2013 by the ongoing conflict, bringing the total number of displaced people to 631,000. In Pakistan, approximately 1 million people remained displaced in Khyber Pakhtunkwa and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. In 2013, more than 108,000 internally displaced returned home with assistance from the Government. In addition, 1.6 million Afghan refugees reside in Pakistan, constituting the world's largest protracted refugee situation.

16. In the Philippines, fighting between armed groups and violent clan feuds continued in Mindanao, where over 140 people were killed and 130,000 displaced. Approximately half of the displaced returned home in late 2013. The lack of available land for resettlement and relocation forms a major constraint for the remaining internally displaced persons.

B. Disasters associated with natural hazards

17. Typhoon Haiyan (locally known as Yolanda) made landfall in the Philippines on 8 November, resulting in the largest loss of life from a natural disaster in 2013. Over 14 million people were affected, including 5.4 million children. Government sources reported at least 6,200 deaths and 1,700 people missing. Over 4 million people were displaced and over 1 million homes were damaged, half of them destroyed. Haiyan came less than one month after an earthquake measuring 7.2 on the Richter scale which hit the nearby island province of Bohol.

18. In Pakistan, monsoon flooding affected approximately 1.5 million people, a significant decrease from previous years (18 million in 2010 and 5 million in 2011 and 2012). In the Islamic Republic of Iran, an earthquake impacted western Balochistan in April, followed by a major earthquake in Balochistan in September, affecting 215,000 people and killing over 400.

19. In the Sahel region, 11.4 million people remained food insecure while 5 million children were at risk of malnutrition. Vulnerable communities continued to feel the impact of the 2012 food and nutrition crisis, including high levels of indebtedness and the need for some people to sell what few assets they still possessed. Despite cereal production surpluses in most of the Sahel countries, a combination of factors, including chronic vulnerability to repeated shocks, have left millions of people unable to recover from the 2012 food and nutrition crisis. Close to 500,000 people were affected by floods in the Sahel, an estimated 233,000 of them in Niger.

20. During 2013, Southern Africa experienced several major disasters, causing at least 191 deaths and affecting an estimated 519,000 people. Heavy rains caused flooding across Mozambique, while Tropical Cyclone Haruna made landfall over southwest Madagascar. The Seychelles declared a state of emergency in three districts owing to floods and landslides. A combination of floods, drought, cyclones and locust/army worm infestation led the region to experience one of the worst food insecurity situations in years, affecting an estimated 15 million people.

21. Haiti continued to recover from the multiple shocks suffered in the last few years, but critical needs remained, with an estimated 3 million people with chronic and acute needs requiring life- and livelihood-saving interventions. Following the 2010 earthquake, over 146,000 people remained displaced, living in 271 displaced persons' sites. Many of the sites are located on private land, so people are at risk of forcible eviction. In 2013, cholera infection rates continued to decrease to some 58,500 recorded cases, compared to 101,700 in 2012.

III. Progress in the coordination of humanitarian action

22. In 2013, the United Nations and its partners continued to improve the quality and effectiveness of humanitarian action, including through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee transformative agenda.[3]

Humanitarian programme cycle

23. An important element of the transformative agenda was the introduction in 2013 of improvements to the humanitarian programme cycle concept. The programme cycle is designed to strengthen the way in which humanitarian actors work collectively, including with and in support of Governments, to help meet the needs of people affected by natural disasters and conflict. The programme cycle consists of five elements: needs assessment and analysis; strategic response planning; resource mobilization; implementation and monitoring; and operational review and evaluation. Coordination and information management are key enablers for each of these steps, as effective, strategic and accountable humanitarian action is based on assessments and analysis of needs.

[3] Although fully supportive of the transformative agenda process, in order to maintain their independence, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which are not members of, but standing invitees to, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, are not signatories to the 2012 transformative agenda protocols.

24. In 2013, particular emphasis was placed on improving the first two elements of the cycle, needs assessment and analysis and strategic planning. The humanitarian needs overview aims to better inform joint planning and provides a comprehensive analysis of a crisis and the prioritization of needs. Agencies or clusters undertake separate assessments and the data are then aggregated and analysed to produce a shared picture of the humanitarian situation. Assessments are undertaken in consultation with the affected Government, international, national and local humanitarian organizations and people affected by the crisis.

25. On the basis of this humanitarian needs overview, a strategic response plan is developed. The strategic response plan is intended to be a "road map" for humanitarian organizations to identify strategic objectives and guide project and programme design: it outlines what the humanitarian country team is trying to achieve, where the work will be carried out and what resources are required. It also serves as the overall framework for collective response monitoring.

26. The programme cycle is not a new concept. For protracted crises, most of the above elements were featured in the annual consolidated appeals process and published in country-specific appeal documents. The new approach to the cycle involves a separation of these elements into distinct, more manageable and better-supported processes and products in order to improve the quality of each element and to ensure that the cycle is a continuous process during the year. It ensures a more inclusive and consultative approach which results in improved support to countries in meeting humanitarian needs and greater accountability to people affected by crises. During the period under review, the revised programme cycle approach was used in 22 countries.

27. Over the coming year the humanitarian programme cycle will continue to be refined and the humanitarian needs overviews and strategic response plans adjusted on the basis of lessons learned during 2013. Preliminary feedback indicates that the revised humanitarian programme cycle resulted in stronger needs analysis and more focused strategic response plans, although the quality of the processes and outputs varied. The prioritization of needs in some countries was also challenging, particularly in places marked by high levels of poverty. The elements found to be in need of strengthening include the quality of the data used to underpin the humanitarian needs overview; inclusion of the different needs of women, girls, boys and men and persons with disabilities throughout the programme cycle; making protection concerns more operational in the strategic response plans; and inter-cluster coordination mechanisms. Further operational guidance is also required on how to engage local non-governmental organizations and foster participation by people affected by crisis throughout the cycle.

Information management

28. Poor baseline data, insufficient consolidation and weak analysis, the inability of different actors responding to a crisis to exchange information quickly and information not being sufficiently used to inform decision-making can be detrimental to effective humanitarian action. Information management is therefore critical to saving lives; without it, people cannot access services or make the best decisions for themselves and their communities, and Governments and humanitarian organizations will make decisions without an accurate overview of the situation. This has an impact on how, where and to whom assistance and protection are provided.

29. During the reporting period, humanitarian agencies and partners continued to find ways to better harness information and technology to benefit people affected by crises as well as responders. Greater attention was given to communicating with communities through all available channels, including radio, television, text messaging and newsletters, to deliver vital information and ensure that responders receive information from affected communities. For example, in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat worked with a global and national network of telecommunications providers and humanitarian partners to reach some 1.2 million people with life-saving information and to open channels of communication for vital feedback on the provision of assistance.

30. With the expansion of technology, the availability and volume of information in crisis situations has grown exponentially. For this information to be useful to the humanitarian community, it must be collected from a wide array of sources and transformed from raw data into information that decision makers can use quickly to help save lives. Pilot projects are under way to make relevant global and operational data more easily available to humanitarian decision makers. In 2013, ReliefWeb Labs launched the Humanitarian Data Exchange project, which aims to create a platform where information collected from multiple sources can be aggregated, stored and transformed into useful data for the humanitarian community. The project is working to create a future where humanitarian data are available in real time, from any device and location, so that Governments, humanitarian organizations and affected people can all work from a common knowledge and information base.

Understanding the different needs of affected people

31. Member States and humanitarian organizations need to ensure that preparedness efforts, humanitarian action and financing meet the distinct needs and priorities of different segments of the population according to sex, age and disability. A number of steps can be taken to improve humanitarian action for all and strengthen accountability to people affected by crisis.

32. Given the different needs, capacities, challenges and experiences of women, children, adolescents, persons with disabilities and older persons, these groups' participation in decision-making processes is essential to ensure that humanitarian programming is appropriate and effective. In 2013, humanitarian actors increased their efforts to involve different segments of the population in decision-making processes. For example, some cluster project implementation committees required 50 per cent representation of women. Making greater use of community capacities and structures such as women's associations and youth groups will help to improve participation in decision-making and in turn contribute to the development of durable solutions, strategies and responses.

33. This inclusive approach should be integral to all phases of the humanitarian programme cycle. Needs identification and prioritization processes should be based on community participatory methodologies that adequately and equitably engage women and men of all ages, including persons with disabilities. The practice of systematically collecting, analysing and using sex- and age-disaggregated data and prioritizing gender and age analysis is fundamental in this respect. While the collection of data disaggregated by sex, age and disability has progressed, more

effort is required to ensure that disaggregated data are maintained throughout the collation process, subjected to analysis and used in programme planning.

34. In 2013, Inter-Agency Standing Committee partners continued to take steps to implement the Committee principals' commitments to improving accountability to affected populations.[4] This included the deployment of a coordinator and the launch of the first action plan for accountability to affected populations in the Philippines. This resulted in programming adjustments being made by various United Nations agencies and non-governmental partners on the basis of suggestions and concerns raised through consultations with women, girls, boys and men of all ages and persons with disabilities. In going forward, more needs to be done to collectively clarify what accountability to affected populations means practically at the field level in order to avoid overlapping mechanisms and an inefficient use of resources. It will also be important to ensure that initiatives integrate existing national and local accountability mechanisms and provide more opportunities for the voices of all affected people to be heard in the programmes and coordination structures designed to serve them.

Protection

35. Humanitarian action is based on a number of principles, including humanity, which requires the provision of life-saving assistance, protecting people from violence and upholding their rights. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee principals adopted a statement on 17 December 2013, which affirms that the protection of all persons affected by conflict and disaster, and those at risk, must inform humanitarian decision-making and response. The statement complements and reinforces the "Rights up front" action plan, which aims to strengthen United Nations action to protect people, wherever they may be, from serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law.

36. A central component of protecting people is understanding their rights and different needs, particularly those of certain groups that may be particularly vulnerable to protection risks, and helping to ensure that crises do not result in further vulnerability or threats to their rights. For example, displacement can lead to people losing their personal documentation, at times resulting in a loss of "legal personality" that can hinder people's access to certain services and limit their freedom of movement. The destruction of schools disrupts education and places children at greater risk of other violations. The loss of community support structures can result in increased isolation of people with disabilities, exposing them to further risk of exploitation and abuse. Crises are also highly disruptive to family and social structures and create new financial demands. Adolescent girls often bear the brunt of these burdens and can be forced into early marriage or sexually abused or exploited, often resulting in dangerous early and unwanted pregnancies. Changes in gender roles resulting from disasters can also raise tensions at the household level and increase the risk of gender-based violence.

37. There are a number of ways that Member States and humanitarian organizations can strengthen the protection of people affected by crises. National authorities, communities and humanitarian organizations can plan and prepare for

[4] In December 2011, the principals of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee endorsed five commitments on accountability to affected populations: leadership, transparency, feedback and complaints, participation and design, monitoring and evaluation.

crises in a way that reduces the risk that people's rights may be violated or their ability to exercise their rights compromised. These efforts can include developing preparedness and contingency plans in consultation with civil society groups and enacting appropriate laws and policies focused on vulnerable groups. In the aftermath of a disaster, the quick restoration of basic services such as education can protect children and adolescents from being exposed to the most acute physical and psychosocial risks, including trafficking, gender-based violence, child labour and recruitment. The provision of sexual and reproductive health services, including emergency reproductive health kits, can help assure safe deliveries. Dignity kits can provide culturally sensitive basic necessities for women and girls of reproductive age, and items such as flashlights and whistles can be used to alert others to a threat of gender-based violence.

Humanitarian financing

38. In 2013, 95 countries, as well as numerous multilateral and regional organizations, private sector organizations and individuals, contributed a total of $14.4 billion in funding to multilateral inter-agency response plans and complementary humanitarian action.[5] This was an increase of $1.6 billion from 2012, largely owing to the magnitude of the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic and the response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines.

39. During the reporting period, Member States and the private sector contributed $474 million to the Central Emergency Response Fund, the highest-ever annual total. These funds enabled the Emergency Relief Coordinator to allocate $482 million for urgent humanitarian response in 45 countries and territories. More than 65 per cent of the funding was used to respond to complex emergencies, 20 per cent to natural disasters and 14 per cent went to other protracted humanitarian emergencies.

40. Country-based pooled funds — common humanitarian funds and emergency response funds — received a total of $419 million from 20 Member States and private donors and allocated $397 million to complex emergencies and natural disasters in 17 countries. Country-based pooled funds played a key role in promoting coordinated humanitarian response across a wide range of partners, with 59 per cent of the funds supporting national and international non-governmental organizations. The funds also facilitated early action by humanitarian partners, which helped to mitigate the risks of crises deepening and reduced the longer-term costs of assistance. Discussions are also ongoing on how the country-based pooled funds can appropriately and strategically support resilience initiatives.

41. While the Central Emergency Response Fund has been crucial in supporting coordinated humanitarian action and strengthened leadership in nearly every major emergency worldwide, with needs and funding requirements continuing to increase, it is essential that the resources channelled through the Fund be utilized in the most strategic manner. To continue to strengthen the strategic use of the Fund, humanitarian coordinators and humanitarian country teams need to take a number of factors into account in allocating resources, including timing; intended impact; implementation capacity; the number of projects supported; geographical priorities, coherence and complementarity with other funding streams; and how the funds can be used to secure additional funding for the response to a crisis.

[5] As reported to the Financial Tracking Service (http://fts.unocha.org/) as at 14 March 2014.

42. The growth of cash-based programming — the distribution of cash or vouchers, instead of goods or services, to people in need — may also impact the financing and delivery of assistance in the future. Cash-based programming has most often been considered as an alternative to food aid, but is increasingly being used in almost all humanitarian sectors, in different settings (urban, rural or camp) and in all phases from preparedness to relief and development. Where appropriate, cash-based programming has the potential to be a cost-effective intervention that can more accurately reflect the needs, capacities and priorities of crisis-affected communities.

IV. Towards more inclusive, interoperable and effective international humanitarian action

43. Preparations are under way for the World Humanitarian Summit to be held in Istanbul in 2016. This initiative of the Secretary-General comes at an opportune time, with widespread recognition that the humanitarian landscape has changed tremendously over the past few decades. The Summit will provide an opportunity for a global consultation to help build more inclusive and diverse humanitarian action and set a common humanitarian agenda for the future. Four themes will serve as broad categories to guide the extensive and inclusive consultations: reducing vulnerability and managing risk; transformation through innovation; serving the needs of people in conflict; and humanitarian effectiveness.

A. Reducing vulnerability and managing risks of humanitarian crises

44. The 2014 global humanitarian appeal targets 52 million people to receive international humanitarian assistance, yet this is only a fraction of the total numbers of people affected by conflicts and disasters, most of whom are not assisted through inter-agency appeals. Over the last decade the global funding requirements of inter-agency appeals have increased by 430 per cent and protracted or recurrent crises have become the norm. In 2012, of the 22 countries with an inter-agency appeal, 21 had experienced at least one other crisis in the previous 10 years. Eight of those countries had had eight or more crises during the same period. A convergence of global trends, including climate change, population growth, unplanned urbanization and food and water insecurity, are eroding people's ability to cope with shocks, making crises more protracted and more recurrent and undermining sustainable institution-building and development. The international humanitarian system is being stretched beyond what it could ever deliver, and caught in the gap are millions of people who fluctuate between states of urgent need for assistance and protracted vulnerability. Continuing to fund crisis response without investing more in managing the underlying risks is not sustainable.

45. Recent reports, including the World Development Report 2014, the study entitled *Saving Lives Today and Tomorrow: Managing the Risk of Humanitarian Crises,* issued by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the study commissioned by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and prepared by the Overseas Development Institute, *Dare to Prepare: Taking Risk Seriously*, provide further evidence and deliver the same message: a fundamental shift is needed towards an approach that not only improves the response to humanitarian crises but

anticipates, prevents and mitigates their recurrence. A change in the "business model" can only be achieved through investment in building national and local capacity to manage crisis risk; humanitarian and development organizations overcoming and transcending the institutional divide that separates them; adequate financing; and leadership and commitment by affected Governments, donors and humanitarian and development organizations.

46. National and local capacity are critical to successful risk management. New partnerships and incentives at the local level to jointly analyse and tackle risks, share early warning information and establish reliable triggers for action are helping to save lives. In India, early action ahead of Cyclone Phalin in October 2013 averted a major disaster. Thanks to effective risk management by national authorities, more than a million people were evacuated from affected areas. Only 38 casualties were reported, compared to over 10,000 lives lost during a similar cyclone in 1999.

47. In concert with national authorities, the United Nations and relevant partners need to strengthen joint planning and coordination of programmes and resources to provide predictable, reliable support to national capacity development for preparedness. This support should recognize the comparative advantage of each organization. Strengthening national preparedness can only succeed if humanitarian and development actors coordinate their resources, skills and action to support national and local capacity.

48. In 2013, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, together with the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and the United Nations Development Group, finalized the Common Framework for Preparedness, which recognizes that national and local governments have the lead role for preparedness and should be supported by the international community where this is consistent with humanitarian principles and human rights norms. The successful implementation of the Common Framework will require continued leadership and engagement from national Governments, donors and humanitarian and development organizations.

49. Humanitarian organizations are working with Governments to build their capacity to manage crisis risk; but they cannot do it alone. It requires humanitarian and development communities to transcend the institutional barriers that separate them. Working in these silos can inhibit the development of programmes that help people manage risk and can prevent a strategic approach being taken to meeting people's immediate needs and at the same time addressing the underlying risks and vulnerabilities which will help to reduce needs in the future. Humanitarian and development actors need to agree on common risk-management and resilience objectives, achievable through joint analysis, planning, programming and funding.

50. Investment in preparedness — not only through funding, but in the implementation of preparedness programmes — has the potential to transform the scale and approach of humanitarian action. The recent studies by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the World Bank and the Overseas Development Institute provide evidence of the benefit-to-cost ratio of emergency preparedness and point to a fundamental flaw in the financing architecture. Less than 0.5 per cent of the $3 trillion in development commitments in the past 20 years has funded prevention and preparedness.

51. New funding mechanisms are not necessarily required, but funding based on objective and shared assessment of risks is essential. It is also important to explore

innovative risk-sharing mechanisms such as insurance, risk pooling and risk mutualization. In Haiti, the Microinsurance Catastrophe Risk Organization, supported by Mercy Corps and other partners, is helping to protect community entrepreneurs from disaster risk. In the Pacific region, the World Bank risk insurance pilot programme is for the first time using scientific measurements such as earthquake magnitude indexes as the basis for a rapid insurance mechanism for small island countries.

52. Finally, leadership and commitment by national Governments and donors to preventing and mitigating the risk of crises is critical. Too often, managing risk outside of crisis is not given priority by Governments or organizations that could support it. It is still easier to respond to actual emergency needs than to invest in risk management over the longer term in the absence of a crisis, particularly where Governments face competing priorities. As a result, national development plans too often neglect addressing the underlying risks that can lead to humanitarian crises. Insufficient focus is given to analysing and addressing the underlying factors that lead to conflict. Funding is often not directed to the countries most at risk. Governments and humanitarian and development organizations do not systematically make the best use of the information available. Ultimately, inertia and inaction in the face of known risks are the greatest disaster risks in themselves, so a change in approach will not be possible without strong leadership at the global, national and organizational levels.

53. The shift towards an anticipatory approach to disasters ultimately requires Governments — affected countries and donors — and all relevant stakeholders to make preventing future humanitarian crises a priority. As the international community prepares for post-2015 development and disaster risk reduction frameworks, and the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, it will be important to recognize that development cannot be sustainable if the risk of crises is not taken into account and proactively addressed as a joint priority.

B. Transformation through innovation

54. In the last decade, the international community has faced rapid social, technological, environmental and economic changes. In evolving with these changes, the humanitarian action of the future will look very different from that of today. A new approach is required to adapt to the changes and bring about improvements in humanitarian action. Member States, the United Nations and its partners need to constantly question the way the humanitarian system works, look outside the international system for ideas and allow for investments in new ideas and solutions that can support a rapid and effective response. Innovation should be embraced by the humanitarian community.

55. Already, innovative approaches are being driven by Governments and people affected by crisis — such as the text messaging-based post-disaster early warning system for disease in the Philippines. A number of donors are increasing their funding to areas of work which promote innovation and many organizations are creating innovation units to improve the way they learn and adapt their practices. For example, UNICEF has 12 innovation labs globally and UNHCR has a dedicated innovation team that supports five labs and 20 innovation fellows globally.

However, there is still only limited donor support and few alternative sources of financing to develop innovative approaches to humanitarian work.

56. New types of partnership are also being developed. Recent examples of public-private projects include collaboration with the Groupe Speciale Mobile Association (GSMA), the mobile-phone industry association, to map where cell phone coverage was available after Typhoon Haiyan; the World Food Programme's partnership with MasterCard to provide cash transfers for food and other basic services; the Ikea Foundation's support to UNHCR Innovation; and the displacement tracking matrix designed by the International Organization for Migration, which utilizes advanced technology from private sector partners to identify the highest priority areas for interventions within displaced communities. A more rigorous process of identifying areas where the humanitarian community, the private sector and other actors have a common interest in collaborating will be an important step in finding new ways to solve humanitarian challenges.

57. The key to successful innovation is a strong evidence base and proof that an idea is not just new, but better. In addition to greater investment in basic research, monitoring and evaluation, more collaboration with research institutions and better sharing of results across organizations will help identify the innovative ideas with the greatest potential impact. Investment in research and development to drive innovation is a way to meet growing and changing needs.

58. Ideally, innovative practices should draw on the knowledge of affected people to develop locally sustainable solutions. From the outset, projects must be designed through a community-centred lens and should be implemented in line with humanitarian principles so that they are inclusive, accessible and uphold the "do no harm" approach. There is a need to consolidate and develop both ethical guidelines and operational safeguards to address issues of exploitation, privacy, community participation, accountability and unintended negative impacts.

C. Serving the needs of people affected by conflict

59. While the past decade has been marked by an increase in devastating natural disasters, complex emergencies have remained at the centre of humanitarian action. Between 2002 and 2013, the United Nations and its partners launched almost 340 humanitarian appeals for a total of over $96 billion. Of that amount, $83 billion was requested to assist people affected by conflicts and approximately $13 billion to address the consequences of natural or other disasters. At the end of 2013, each of the 10 largest consolidated humanitarian appeals involved situations of armed conflict. Most of these crises have now been going on for over five years.

60. Ultimately, parties to a conflict bear the primary responsibility for the safety and well-being of people in areas under their control. Their compliance with their obligations under international humanitarian law and human rights law is paramount to ensuring the protection of people affected by conflict. However, too often these obligations are ignored or flagrantly violated.

61. As a result, the human cost of conflicts is staggering. The direct consequences of conflict for women, girls, boys and men include deaths, wounds, disabilities, torture, cruel and inhumane treatment and gender-based violence. However, conflict also limits or prevents people's access to basic services, undermines their ability to

generate sustainable livelihoods and destroys or damages infrastructure. It is widely recognized that conflict sets back the development of a country by decades, including critical institutional developments such as justice systems, leading to prolonged suffering and creating further vulnerabilities to disaster risks. While the impacts are visible and obvious, work should continue to improve casualty recording.

62. Many of the key features of conflict are recurring, last for decades and serve as sad reminders of the need for principled humanitarian action in conflict settings. A few of them are considered in more detail below.

Internal displacement

63. For millions of people, fleeing their homes and seeking safety within and across borders has become their only option when seeking to survive violence and is only the beginning of an ordeal that may last for years or even decades, marked by trauma, impoverishment and reduced access to basic services. While the right to freedom of movement and to leave one's country and seek asylum must always be respected, displacement should never be accepted as inevitable. The majority of those displaced by conflict are often unable to return for years, sometimes never, and therefore require sustained and consistent support.

64. Some 80 per cent of the 28.8 million people who were estimated to be internally displaced owing to conflict and violence in 2012 lived in urban and non-camp settings, often residing with host communities. Yet, internally displaced persons living in camps or other "gathered" settings remain more likely to receive protection and assistance. Affected countries and humanitarian and development organizations must do more to meet the needs of internally displaced persons in urban and non-camp settings. "Combined" approaches to provide protection and assistance to internally displaced persons and host community members, as well as targeted interventions to address the specific assistance and protection needs of the internally displaced must be strengthened, including through respect of international humanitarian law and human rights law and greater application of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. With national Governments in the lead, all actors, including the international community, must make greater efforts to achieve durable solutions that ensure that internally displaced persons' needs are met, including long-term security, access to social services, adequate housing, livelihoods, personal documentation and access to justice. A more systematic implementation of the Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons promulgated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, as well as other relevant international guidelines, is instrumental in that respect.

Explosive weapons in populated areas

65. The use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in urban and populated areas is of increasing concern. During 2013, almost 38,000 people were reported killed or injured by such weapons, 82 per cent of them civilians. When explosive weapons were used in populated areas, 93 per cent of the casualties were reportedly civilians.[6] In addition to death and injury, civilians are often displaced for long periods and in precarious conditions. Housing, health facilities and essential infrastructure are often damaged or destroyed. Education is also disrupted and

[6] Action on Armed Violence, "Monitoring Explosive Violence 2013" (April 2014).

livelihoods are devastated. The use of explosive weapons in populated areas has a dramatic impact on post-conflict reconstruction. Their remnants are a threat to people, sometimes for generations.

66. Humanitarian actors such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the International Committee of the Red Cross and many non-governmental organizations, supported by several Member States, have started to address this growing problem through a number of consultations that are aimed at promoting recognition of the humanitarian impact of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas, strengthening the political commitment to address the problem and developing practical measures based on existing good practice.

Humanitarian access

67. Reaching people affected by conflict is not only a prerequisite for effective humanitarian action but gives effect to core principles of international humanitarian law — to save lives and reduce unnecessary and prolonged suffering. Parties to armed conflicts have the primary responsibility to meet the basic needs of civilians in areas under their control. When they fail to do so, impartial humanitarian action becomes necessary to provide the people affected with supplies essential to their survival. The timeliness of humanitarian response is critical to its effectiveness in saving lives. Under international humanitarian law, the consent of parties concerned is required before humanitarian relief actions may be implemented. Parties to the conflict must allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded access to humanitarian relief for all civilians in need.

68. Denying much-needed assistance or preventing impartial aid organizations from reaching people in need without valid reasons is arbitrary and unjustified. It goes against the very essence of the principle of humanity. In this regard, efforts are under way to engage with Member States, legal experts and humanitarian and civil society actors to clarify the notion of arbitrary withholding of consent from a legal perspective and consider options for providing relevant guidance.

69. In situations of armed conflict, the combination of violence against humanitarian workers, active hostilities and restrictions on movement has severely affected people's access to humanitarian assistance and protection. Bureaucratic impediments can have a serious impact on the speed of a humanitarian response. To allow for an effective response, procedures for the deployment of humanitarian personnel, assets and goods need to be simple and fast. Steps that can be taken by affected Governments to achieve this include reducing delays for customs clearance and visas; lifting restrictions on essential items, including communication and security equipment; removing taxes and fees on relief items and activities; lifting restrictions on in-country movements for humanitarian personnel and goods; and establishing a focal point for legal registration within the country.

70. Good practices and mechanisms are now well established in the context of disasters, such as the Guidelines for the Domestic Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance, adopted at the Thirtieth International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, held in Geneva from 26 to 30 November 2007. Member States and humanitarian organizations should explore options to develop similar guidelines and processes consistent with international humanitarian law for conflict settings.

Safety and security of humanitarian personnel

71. Humanitarian organizations operating in conflict settings increasingly face serious challenges and restrictions. For example, humanitarian workers are more at risk of direct violence. Preliminary records from the Aid Worker Security Database show that 356 aid workers were killed, kidnapped and seriously wounded in 2013,[7] the highest number ever recorded and an increase of 29 per cent from 2012. The largest proportion of aid workers killed — 56 of 127 killed (44 per cent) — were victims of targeted attacks or crossfire while delivering assistance. Improvised explosive devices and complex attacks accounted for 17 per cent of aid workers killed. More than three quarters of the victims (298 of 356) were national staff, who account for the majority of humanitarian workers.

72. Despite direct attacks against health-care personnel, facilities, vehicles and services being serious violations of international humanitarian law that can constitute war crimes,[8] the reporting period also witnessed an increased number of attacks during vaccination campaigns, as well as numerous intentional attacks on first responders. The deliberate denial of impartial health-care services to civilians and sick and wounded combatants was also observed, including the removal of medical items from aid shipments. This resulted in health-care personnel being unable to adequately address the needs of affected people and to care for the sick and wounded. The obligation to respect and protect health-care personnel, facilities and equipment lies at the core of international humanitarian law. Ensuring that parties to conflict are systematically and effectively held accountable for attacks against humanitarian and health-care personnel is an urgent priority.

Issues to consider going forward

73. The humanitarian community needs to tackle these challenges and continue to consider different ways of offering assistance and protection. New actors have also taken a larger part in humanitarian action and different models of partnerships have arisen, including through reaching people with assistance through cash-transfer programmes and remotely managing operations by utilizing local organizations and partners to deliver international assistance. The advantages and disadvantages of various models involving local and international actors will require further consideration. Humanitarian actors also need to consider issues of diversification; operating in conflict settings cannot follow a "one size fits all" approach. It requires specific skills, sensitivities and the ability to build the necessary trust with local communities and parties to a conflict. The ability to build trust and acceptance also depends on a stay-and-deliver approach that allows humanitarian actors to reach communities in the midst of conflict when it matters most and to stay at their time of greatest need.

D. Humanitarian effectiveness

74. In recent years, a variety of reform efforts have worked to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian action, including the Inter-Agency Standing

[7] As at 21 April 2014; the figures for 2013 have not been finalized.

[8] Health-care personnel, facilities, transports and services lose their protection under international humanitarian law when they commit, or are used to commit, acts harmful to the enemy.

Committee transformative agenda, the creation of professional standards for humanitarian actors, implementation of good donor practices and principles and the development of humanitarian standards and certification schemes for the provision of assistance. Steps taken to improve humanitarian financing through pooled funds have also enhanced the timeliness and flexibility of humanitarian funding. At the same time, Member States — affected countries and donors — and humanitarian organizations have recognized the need for a more profound review and improvements to the way humanitarian assistance is being delivered to meet the challenges of a changing global landscape and to respond more effectively, and with more sustainable results, to humanitarian crises. While efforts to date have helped to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian action, they have largely focused inwardly, that is, on the effectiveness of the existing international humanitarian response system.

75. In looking forward, the analysis of what is effective needs to extend beyond the international humanitarian system. It will need to recognize the different perspectives and comparative advantages of the various actors responding to a humanitarian crisis, including affected people and their governments at local and national levels, first responders, diaspora and civil society groups and the business community. Continuing to consider the context and the phase of a response will also matter. It will be further necessary to anticipate how emerging trends and challenges such as technology, the growth of middle-income countries and their own capacities, new partners and increasing needs and inequalities will change the way the needs of people affected by crises will be met in the future.

Different perspectives on effectiveness

76. It is the primary responsibility of the national and local authorities of the country affected to meet the needs of people affected by a crisis, whether in conflict or natural disaster settings. While international humanitarian organizations have a critical role to play, it is recognized that an effective response increasingly depends on the successful interplay of multiple actors in a humanitarian emergency. These other actors include first responders, civil society, national and foreign militaries, bilateral or regional governmental support, various private sector organizations (multinational, national and local) and diaspora communities, among others. Understanding their perspectives as to what they consider effective humanitarian action — their knowledge of the situation and the needs of people affected; how to respond and over what time period — is important to providing a more holistic picture of what constitutes effectiveness.

77. It is critical for all actors involved in a humanitarian response to understand what affected people, communities and countries need and what they are doing to meet their own needs, and how they can support these efforts and connect with them rather than duplicate or replace them. During and after any humanitarian crisis, people from the community and local organizations are the first responders and will be the most likely to have direct access to people in need and remain there to support recovery. National and local responders are more likely to work with existing infrastructure and markets, improving the sustainability of response efforts. Therefore, a key element of making overall humanitarian action more effective is the effectiveness of local and national humanitarian responses and understanding how other actors can complement and strengthen local and national response capacity. For example, diaspora groups, with their expertise and funding, may

sometimes be able to contribute faster and more directly than national or international entities.

78. Given the diverse range of actors engaged in responding to an emergency, when considering what constitutes effective humanitarian action, it will be less important who is delivering the assistance than how well the needs of people are being met. This will require recognition of the various actors, networks and systems and a wider understanding and respect for their comparative advantages, motivations and limitations. To achieve this, more investment is needed — outside of crises — to increase the interoperability of these different actors, including by developing predictable platforms for engagement, cooperation and coordination and a focused discussion around common objectives, standards and delivery methods with each of them.

79. These discussions will need to consider how international agencies can better connect with and support the increasing number of national disaster management authorities and national disaster response plans; how private sector interests can be reconciled with international standards of delivery and public sector donations; how to resolve tensions that arise from needing to provide life-saving assistance in conflict settings by engaging with all parties to a conflict, while at the same time contributing to longer-term government priorities on resilience and capacity-building; and how to work with actors outside the existing governmental or international response frameworks to develop common goals and standards. In the lead-up to the World Humanitarian Summit, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs will prepare a study to examine humanitarian effectiveness from different perspectives.

Context of the crisis

80. How the effectiveness of humanitarian action is measured will also depend on the context in which the emergency is taking place and the capacity and enabling environment established by the host Government or by parties to a conflict. For example, in natural disaster or chronic vulnerability settings, the capacity of local and national governments is critical for the effectiveness of the overall response. Humanitarian agencies need to work closely with these authorities in support of their efforts. However, in a conflict setting, the effectiveness of humanitarian action may depend less on the capacity of the Government, particularly where it is a party to a conflict, and more on the ability of international humanitarian agencies to engage with all parties to the conflict, based on humanitarian principles, to reach people and meet the life-saving and protection needs of the affected population.

Emerging trends and challenges

81. Humanitarian effectiveness also needs to be considered within the changing nature of the humanitarian landscape. Middle-income countries are taking greater ownership and leadership in responding to crises within their own countries, deploying increased economic and institutional capabilities. International and national corporations and local businesses are more engaged in humanitarian response. With the increased use of direct cash transfers to affected people — and growing technological and scientific advances — there are more opportunities than ever to meet the needs of affected people.

82. This is a critical time to assess what constitutes effective humanitarian action. The extent to which the international humanitarian system adapts to the changing realities, recognizing the multiplicity of options and actors, highlighting its own comparative advantages and offering to be a broker of solutions to affected Governments and people, will be critical to closing capacity and delivery gaps, strengthening global support for humanitarian action and more effectively meeting the needs of the most vulnerable.

V. Recommendations

83. On the basis of the above, the Secretary-General recommends the following:

(a) Member States, non-State actors and humanitarian organizations should continue to promote greater respect for and adherence to the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence;

(b) Member States and, where applicable, non-State actors should adhere to their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law, including by allowing and facilitating the rapid and unimpeded access of humanitarian relief to affected persons in need, and recognize that such consent must not be arbitrarily withheld;

(c) Member States and, where applicable, non-State actors should adhere to their obligation to respect and protect humanitarian and health-care personnel, their transports and facilities, including by pursuing all domestic and international options to ensure accountability for all attacks in contravention of relevant international law;

(d) Member States, United Nations entities and civil society organizations should continue to promote recognition of the humanitarian impact of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas, strengthen the political commitment to address the problem and develop practical measures based on existing good practice;

(e) Member States should make further efforts to simplify and expedite procedures for the deployment of humanitarian personnel and goods, including by exploring means of adapting the good practices and mechanisms developed in the context of natural disasters to other types of crises, including conflict and chronic vulnerability settings;

(f) Member States, United Nations actors and humanitarian organizations should continue to work together to ensure that people are protected from harm and their rights upheld before and during a crisis, including by understanding the different protection needs of different people, particularly the most vulnerable, and ensuring that these needs are adequately integrated into preparedness, response, and recovery efforts;

(g) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should strengthen their efforts to ensure better protection, assistance and development strategies for internally displaced persons, including through working together to strengthen the implementation of the Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons promulgated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee; and humanitarian organizations should improve coordination to better

address the needs of internally displaced persons, recognizing the central role of the Emergency Relief Coordinator;

(h) The United Nations and humanitarian organizations should continue efforts to strengthen needs analysis and strategic planning to ensure a better informed, more effective, transparent and collective response to the needs of people affected by crises;

(i) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian actors should continue to identify, understand and analyse the distinct needs, challenges and coping capacities of women, girls, boys and men, including by improving the disaggregation of sex-, age- and disability-specific data during collation and their use in analysis and programme planning; strengthening the participation of all affected women, girls, boys and men in decision-making structures; and consistently utilizing the gender marker and other monitoring tools to improve gender and age analysis and track funding allocations;

(j) Member States should strengthen leadership and commitment to preventing and mitigating humanitarian crises by, inter alia, integrating risk management into national development plans, increasing funding for crisis prevention and mitigation and basing funding decisions on risk analysis to ensure that funding supports the people and countries at highest risk of crises;

(k) Humanitarian and development organizations should continue to strengthen efforts to overcome institutional barriers to working together by, inter alia, planning on the basis of a common analysis of risk, aligning planning cycles where possible and employing tools and processes to jointly analyse crisis risk;

(l) The United Nations and humanitarian organizations, together with development organizations, should continue to support national leadership in building in-country preparedness capacity, including under the Common Framework for Preparedness of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, the United Nations Development Group and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction;

(m) The United Nations and humanitarian organizations should continue efforts to map emergency preparedness and response capacities of affected countries, including their Governments and civil society, private sector and other relevant actors, in order to better understand how the international community can build upon and complement existing local and national capacities;

(n) The United Nations and humanitarian organizations should identify best practices and new opportunities to enhance interoperability between affected Governments, community responders, civil society, diaspora groups, humanitarian organizations, the private sector and other providers of bilateral and multilateral assistance to address capacity and resource gaps and meet the needs of affected people more effectively;

(o) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should continue to promote innovation within the humanitarian sector by increasing investment in research, development and evaluation of new approaches to aid delivery and by reviewing policies that may contribute to unintended barriers to innovation, including humanitarian financing and procurement guidelines.

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Item 10 (a) of the provisional agenda**
Coordination, programme and other questions: reports of coordination bodies

Annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination for 2013

Summary

The present report provides an overview of major developments in inter-agency cooperation within the framework of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) in 2013. The report highlights the key activities of CEB in fostering a coherent approach on policy, operational and management matters to enhance United Nations system-wide coordination in support of intergovernmental bodies. The report also provides information on efforts to enhance coherence and coordination on system-wide preparation and follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits. In 2013, CEB, through its High-level Committee on Programmes, focused specifically on system-wide support to the acceleration of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals; enhancing implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (Istanbul Programme of Action) by United Nations system organizations; advanced system-wide coordination in the preparation of the post-2015 development agenda; the nineteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; and the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States. Seeking to increase the effectiveness and impact of operational activities of the United Nations system, CEB, through the United Nations Development Group, placed the highest priority on ensuring coherent implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations across the system with a firm focus on high-impact priority areas. With regard to administrative and management issues of system-wide concern, CEB, through its High-level Committee on Management, focused on modernizing human resources management and improving business practices. The report also highlights coordination activities between CEB and other jointly financed bodies.

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I. Introduction

1. Pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2008 (LX), the present report provides an overview of the annual work of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB). It also responds to the request by the General Assembly, in paragraph 4 (b) of its resolution 64/289 on system-wide coherence, to include appropriate information on the work of the Board in its annual overview report to the Economic and Social Council, which is also studied by the Committee for Programme and Coordination, in order to promote more effective dialogue. The present report covers the year 2013.

2. In response to General Assembly resolution 68/20, in which the Assembly endorsed the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on the work of its fifty-third session (A/68/16, chap. III.A), the annual overview report highlights major activities carried out under the aegis of CEB to enhance United Nations system-wide coherence and coordination in support of and in conformity with intergovernmental mandates.

3. In resolution 68/20, in endorsing the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, the General Assembly emphasized the role of CEB in fostering policy coherence and coordination in the United Nations system to promote effective action in support of national priorities and in accordance with intergovernmental mandates. The Assembly welcomed in particular the efforts of CEB to contribute to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and noted the need for coordinated United Nations system-wide support in the preparation and follow-up of the post-2015 development agenda. The Board's work in support of a harmonization and simplification of business practices was recognized in the light of their potential for increasing efficiencies and reducing administrative and procedural burdens. In this context, the need to facilitate opportunities for developing countries and countries in transition in the procurement process in accordance with existing rules and regulations was stressed. Member States placed great importance on the transparency and accountability of CEB and encouraged the Board to continue to improve its dialogue with Member States.

4. The challenges facing the international community continue to grow in complexity and diversity, and will shortly take on new dimensions as the Millennium Development Goals reach their conclusion in the coming year. To support the efforts of Member States to meet these challenges, CEB brings to bear a coordinated approach to the broad range of expertise that exists across the United Nations system.

5. CEB also sought to improve transparency and accountability by launching a new CEB website (www.unsceb.org) and engaging in formal and informal exchanges and dialogues with Member States throughout the year. The Board also continued to coordinate with other jointly financed bodies, in particular the International Civil Service Commission and the Joint Inspection Unit.

6. In 2013, CEB welcomed the following new members: Li Yong, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, Mukhisa Kituyi, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and Roberto Carvalho de Azevêdo, World Trade Organization.

II. Promoting system-wide preparation and follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits

7. Throughout 2013, CEB responded to calls by the General Assembly for system-wide coordination in the preparation and follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits, including the Millennium Summit, post-2015 development agenda, Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, and the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States. In support of those conferences and summits, CEB developed joint contributions and enhanced United Nations system-wide coherence in the implementation of conference outcomes.

A. Accelerating implementation of the Millennium Development Goals

8. The Millennium Development Goals galvanized an unprecedented global effort to meet the needs of the world's poorest. Yet, despite substantial gains, many countries are struggling to meet one or more of the goals by the target date of 2015. With the Millennium Development Goal deadline rapidly approaching, CEB decided at its second regular session of 2012 to include a review of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals at each of its forthcoming sessions through 2015. Bringing together the leaders of the United Nations system under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General, CEB has the ability to align the strengths, capacities and expertise of the member organizations to enhance coherence and to ensure that the United Nations system delivers as one on this critical agenda at the global, regional and country levels. To achieve the acceleration of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, CEB committed to taking a bold problem-solving approach to urgently and cohesively support country efforts to achieve tangible results. As noted, in its resolution 68/20 the General Assembly endorsed the conclusions and recommendations in the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (A/68/16), inter alia on the report of CEB and welcomed the CEB periodic review of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals at the country level, as well as the Board's support to Member States (see resolution 68/20, para. 5, and A/68/16, para. 230).

9. The review is being conducted at the principal level under the leadership of the Secretary-General and the co-chairmanship of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the President of the World Bank Group. It identifies bottlenecks preventing progress in meeting the Millennium Development Goals and determines concrete steps for United Nations system organizations to help countries achieve substantial results. The review does not duplicate existing Millennium Development Goal tracking and monitoring mechanisms. Rather, it reinforces United Nations system-wide support to the implementation of country-owned action plans for the acceleration of Millennium Development Goals, ensuring a coordinated approach to the technical and operational expertise of the United Nations system.

10. In 2013, the first two rounds of review were completed. In total, three Millennium Development Goals in eight countries were considered by CEB: the Niger, the United Republic of Tanzania and Burkina Faso, on hunger and poverty (Goal 1); Ghana, El Salvador, Indonesia and Kyrgyzstan on maternal health (Goal 5); and Nepal on sanitation (target of Goal 7). The respective United Nations resident

coordinators and World Bank country directors joined the CEB members in an interactive dialogue to identify solutions to accelerate achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

11. Broadly, the review has been regarded by the United Nations country teams as a useful exercise for prompting a fresh look at strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals at the country level. It has also improved coordination and cooperation among the organizations of the United Nations development system and the World Bank on the ground. CEB members offered a range of proposals for accelerating implementation of the Millennium Development Goals that would significantly scale up support in identified countries, promote greater alignment of agency programmes, and facilitate cross-country knowledge-sharing in relevant areas.

B. Coordinating United Nations system-wide support in the preparation of the post-2015 development agenda

12. In 2013, Member States affirmed not only their commitment to intensify efforts to accelerate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals but also their determination to craft a strong post-2015 development agenda that would build on the foundations laid by the Millennium Development Goals. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 68/6 containing the outcome document of the special event to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, the post-2015 development agenda should reinforce the international community's commitment to poverty eradication and sustainable development through a coherent approach that integrates in a balanced manner the three dimensions of sustainable development into a single framework and set of goals, universal in nature and applicable to all countries. Member States emphasized the need for strong support of the United Nations system throughout all their work towards an inclusive and people-centred post-2015 development agenda.

13. In an effort to assist Member States in building a coherent post-2015 development agenda, the United Nations Development Group spearheaded an unprecedented, multi-stakeholder outreach to facilitate a global conversation to contribute to the work of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the deliberations of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals.

14. The ongoing initiative provides a space for people's voices, including a sustained effort to reach out to the poor and marginalized. To date, nearly 2 million people around the world have engaged in a conversation on their aspirations for a global development framework. The consultations were held as national dialogues led by United Nations country teams in collaboration with governments, civil society and other partners, global thematic consultations, along with the World We Want web platform (www.worldwewant2015.org) and My World global survey (www.myworld2015.org).

15. Building on the results of the national consultations, regional United Nations Development Group teams and the regional commissions convened consultations that further broadened the scope of country representation in the multi-stakeholder dialogues. Preliminary findings of the ongoing global initiative are captured in the United Nations Development Group reports (available from the World We Want web

platform), entitled *The Global Conversation Begins: Emerging Views for a New Development Agenda* and *A Million Voices: The World We Want — A Sustainable Future with Dignity for All*.

16. Throughout 2013, the High-level Committee on Programmes supported the preparatory process towards a post-2015 development agenda by assisting CEB in fostering system-wide coherence and addressing, in an integrated manner, challenges and opportunities faced by the United Nations system in defining its own role and contribution within a changed development policy environment. In this context, the High-level Committee on Programmes developed a United Nations system-wide view on the recommendations and findings of the report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (*A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development*) as an input to the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals: options for sustained and inclusive growth and issues for advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015" (A/67/257). The United Nations system supported the key findings and recommendations of the report of the High-level Panel by endorsing the five big transformational shifts required to drive a universal post-2015 development agenda approach contained therein. These transformation shifts include: (a) leaving no one behind; (b) putting sustainable development at the core; (c) transforming economies for jobs and inclusive growth; (d) building peace and effective, open and accountable institutions for all; and (e) forging a new global partnership.

17. The High-level Committee on Programmes also prepared an issues paper that offered thought leadership and critical analysis for further reflection by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination on the institutional and policy implications of a transformative and universal post-2015 development agenda with sustainable development at its core. Key among the challenges identified was the need for coherent integration of policies across the three dimensions of sustainable development within the broad context of the United Nations mandate of peace and security, development, human rights and the rule of law. At its November 2013 session, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination subsequently reflected on key issues where a common understanding and clarity and unity of stance across the United Nations system would be essential. Those issues included, inter alia, the principle of universality; the relationship between the sustainable development goals and the unfinished Millennium Development Goal agenda; and means of implementation.

18. The United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination concluded that for the United Nations system to remain effective in its support to Member States, it would need to converge around the conceptual, procedural and operational challenges to deliver on the future sustainable development agenda. To this end, the Chief Executives Board for Coordination called upon its subsidiary bodies to jointly develop options on how the United Nations system could best support Member States as the international community strives to transition to a new, universal development agenda centred on sustainable development, including implementation at the country level. Five interlinked elements were identified as critical for the post-2015 development agenda: (a) universality; (b) integration; (c) equality; (d) human rights; and (e) the data revolution. The implications of these elements for the United Nations development system as well as a number of possible accelerators for change will be further explored in 2014.

C. Advancing United Nations system-wide implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020

19. The least developed countries, representing the poorest group of developing countries, face unique economic, social and environmental vulnerabilities. The commitment of CEB to least developed countries and to the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (Istanbul Programme of Action) followed from the Board's endorsement of a statement of support to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held from 9 to 13 May 2011 in Istanbul, Turkey. Subsequently, the High-level Committee on Programmes agreed to consider progress made by the United Nations system in mainstreaming the Istanbul Programme of Action at the five-year review mark.

20. In its resolution 67/220, the General Assembly invited the Secretary-General to appropriately integrate the work of the Inter-Agency Consultative Group for least developed countries led by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States within the framework of the High-level Committee on Programmes in order to ensure necessary coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action on a system-wide basis, and to include implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action as a standing item on the agenda of the Board. At its first regular session of 2013, the Board requested the High-level Committee on Programmes to work with the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and the Inter-Agency Consultative Group to develop ideas for furthering the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action.

21. At its twenty-sixth session, held in October 2013, the High-level Committee on Programmes endorsed a proposal submitted by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States related to the United Nations system-wide implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in the form of a toolkit. The proposal contained a series of actions to assist organizations that have not yet been able to mainstream the Istanbul Programme of Action in their work programmes. The Committee will hold a substantive discussion on the issue at its thirtieth session in 2015.

D. Supporting small island developing States

22. There are 38 countries in the Caribbean, the Pacific and the Atlantic, the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean and the South China Sea that belong to the distinct group of small island developing States. The need to review and enhance the effectiveness, coherence and coordination of United Nations system support for small island developing States has been recognized by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in various resolutions. Most recently in its resolution 68/238, paragraphs 5 and 22, the General Assembly reiterated its call for the strengthening of United Nations system support to small island developing States, as well as for the Secretary-General to ensure inter-agency cooperation and

effective participation and coherence within the United Nations system in the upcoming third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, to be held in Apia in September 2014.

23. At its second regular session in November 2013, CEB decided to hold a high-level side event in support of the Conference theme the "sustainable development of small island developing States through genuine and durable partnerships". The side event will demonstrate what the United Nations system, working together, can tangibly contribute to the sustainable development of small island developing States. In 2014, in the lead-up to the Conference, the High-level Committee on Programmes will consider how it may best promote efforts to strengthen coherence among United Nations system activities in support of small island developing States and make recommendations for consideration by CEB.

III. Strengthening policy coherence and coordination

24. In 2013, CEB pursued a number of initiatives for advancing policy coherence and programmatic coordination, in particular in the areas of international migration and development, youth, human rights, cybercrime and cybersecurity, and climate change. Those system-wide activities were carried out in response to intergovernmental mandates and were guided by the strategic vision adopted by the High-level Committee on Programmes, which outlines a range of emerging issues warranting consideration within the United Nations system (see CEB/2013/1, annex III).

A. Integrating human rights in the work of the United Nations system

25. The outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012, entitled "The future we want" (General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex) reaffirmed the importance of respect for human rights for sustainable development, peace and security and the rule of law. Building on the progress made in recent years in mainstreaming human rights into development work, efforts to integrate human rights into the work of the United Nations system culminated, in 2013, in "Rights up front", an initiative by the Secretary-General to renew the commitment of the United Nations to safeguard human rights around the world. In response, CEB, through its subsidiary mechanisms the High-level Committee on Programmes and the United Nations Development Group, enhanced its efforts to foster policy coherence in the area of human rights. The Board reaffirmed its commitment to the human rights principles of the United Nations, as established in the Charter of the United Nations and codified in the human rights conventions and declaration adopted under United Nations auspices, and in this context, endorsed the Secretary-General's statement of 22 November 2013, entitled "Renewing our commitment to the peoples and purposes of the United Nations".

26. The progress of United Nations reforms in the areas of human rights and development opened new windows of opportunity to engage and support Member States in fulfilling their human rights commitments and national development goals. Supporting the mutually reinforcing linkages between development, peace and security, and human rights, the United Nations Development Group fostered policy coherence and coordination in human rights mainstreaming and accelerated

implementation of key strategies to strengthen normative and operational linkages within the United Nations system, including through deploying human rights advisers to resident coordinator offices, strengthening guidance, and initiating work on a monitoring and evaluation framework for measuring United Nations country team performance with regard to human rights mainstreaming. The United Nations Development Group also committed to driving implementation of the "Rights up front" action plan by instructing United Nations country teams to take forward all those elements of the initiative that are relevant to their particular country contexts.

27. At the country level, United Nations country teams directed efforts towards assisting an increasing number of Member States requesting capacity development support on human rights to engage with United Nations human rights mechanisms, including the universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council, and to mainstream international human rights standards and obligations in national development strategies and processes.

28. Drawing on successful United Nations country team work, the United Nations Development Group issued a best practice publication, *Mcinstreaming Human Rights in Development: Stories from the Field*, to ensure the sharing of technical information, knowledge and expertise as an important component of the United Nations Development Group strategic vision for enhancing mainstreaming of human rights at the country level and demonstrating the potential of this work for advancing sustainable development.

B. Contributing to international migration and development

29. Acknowledging the important and complex interrelationship between international migration and development, and the need to deal with the challenges and opportunities that migration presents to countries of origin, transit and destination, the General Assembly, in its resolution 67/219, decided to hold a High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development on 3 and 4 October 2013. In paragraph 7 of the resolution, the Assembly also invited United Nations system organizations and other relevant entities to contribute to the preparation of and participation in the High-level Dialogue.

30. Responding to the invitation of the General Assembly, CEB requested the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in collaboration with the Global Migration Group, to propose recommendations and outcomes as an input to the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. They include actions to: (a) advance the human rights and human development aspects of migration; (b) strengthen the knowledge and evidence base; (c) mainstream migration into national development policies and plans, and into the post-2015 United Nations development agenda; (d) improve inter-State and multi-stakeholder engagement and cooperation; and (e) address emerging issues. The Board endorsed them at its first session in 2013 and also welcomed the development of a joint publication entitled *International Migration and Development: Contributions and Recommendations of the International System* (www.unsceb.org), which was launched on the margins of the High-level Dialogue.

C. Promoting coordinated action on youth

31. The World Programme of Action for Youth, adopted by the General Assembly in 1995, provides the policy framework and practical guidelines for national action and international support to improve the well-being of young people around the world. Member States have repeatedly requested the United Nations system to continue their coordination towards a more coherent, comprehensive and integrated approach to youth development, most recently in General Assembly resolutions 66/121 and 68/130.

32. Acting on the decision of CEB of April 2012 to take additional steps to improve coordination within the system on youth issues, the High-level Committee on Programmes tasked the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development, under the leadership of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), to develop a United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Youth.

33. The Action Plan on Youth was guided by the World Programme of Action for Youth and focuses on joint action by the United Nations system on the issues of employment, entrepreneurship, political inclusion, civic engagement and protection of rights, education (including comprehensive sexuality education) and health. Within each thematic area, commitments, measures and indicators to monitor implementation have been enumerated and are grounded in mandates received from intergovernmental bodies, including the World Programme of Action for Youth. On the recommendation of the High-level Committee on Programmes, CEB endorsed the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Youth at its first regular session in April 2013. The United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Youth is expected to deepen the youth focus of new and existing programmes of the United Nations system and to promote joint programmatic work.

34. The Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development, under the leadership of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UNFPA, have subsequently developed guidance for implementation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Youth and a communications strategy to widely publicize the Action Plan among United Nations system organizations, including at the country and regional levels.

D. Addressing cybercrime and cybersecurity

35. The interconnected nature of modern society accelerates commerce, opens vast opportunities for development and connects individuals across the globe on an unprecedented scale. However, the same technologies that Governments, private-sector enterprises and a growing proportion of the world's population depend upon every day also bring risks for security and privacy. In recognition of the increasing concern among agencies of the United Nations system regarding cybersecurity and cybercrime, CEB, through its High-level Committee on Programmes, endorsed a United Nations-wide framework on cybersecurity and cybercrime in November 2013. The framework establishes principles for program development activities related to cybercrime and cybersecurity as well as for better coordination among United Nations entities on this issue in support of Member States.

36. As it reviewed the information security landscape during its second regular session in November 2013, CEB focused its deliberations on the role that United Nations system organizations can play, both individually and collectively, to support intergovernmental deliberations relating to cybersecurity, cybercrime and information policies. To further these efforts, CEB agreed that United Nations system organizations would work together to develop a system-wide comprehensive and coherent strategy to support agencies as they address the challenges of cybersecurity, cybercrime and policies on information.

E. Facilitating United Nations system action on climate change

37. Promoting action on climate change features high on the agenda of Member States as well as the Secretary-General. The United Nations system, through the High-level Committee on Programmes Working Group on Climate Change, intensified its work in 2013 to facilitate United Nations system-wide coordination and coherence on climate change-related activities.

38. Sharing information on and lessons learned from action undertaken by the United Nations system in support of Member States' efforts in the implementation of climate change commitments was an important activity pursued by CEB in 2013. At the nineteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Warsaw from 11 to 22 November, the United Nations system held a CEB high-level event, under the Secretary-General's leadership, and coordinated a series of joint United Nations-system side events. The CEB high-level side event entitled "The United Nations system as a catalyst for climate action: promoting sustainable low-carbon development" sought to add impetus to the Secretary-General's leadership efforts by providing evidence that sustainable, low-carbon development can yield impressive economic, social and environmental benefits domestically while contributing to climate action globally.

39. The High-level Committee on Programmes, through the Working Group on Climate Change, also advanced collaboration on climate change activities in a number of programmatic areas in 2013. Several ongoing joint United Nations system climate initiatives have been deepened or expanded over the course of the year, including activities of the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD), Climate-Smart Agriculture, the Climate Finance Options Platform, the Global Framework for Climate Services and the One United Nations Training Service Platform on Climate Change (CC:Learn). Two new initiatives have also been developed within the context of the Working Group: the Task Team on Urban Risk Management and Climate-Smart Cities to promote joint programming of inter-agency climate projects and initiatives in cities; and Integrated spatial data for climate adaptation planning, an inter-agency initiative that seeks to inform vulnerability assessments and adaptation planning through a common spatial data framework for climate-related data.

IV. Enhancing the effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and impact of United Nations operational activities for development

40. In response to General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of United Nations operational activities for development of the United Nations system, the United Nations Development Group placed the highest priority on ensuring coherent implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review across the system with a firm focus on high-impact areas. The United Nations Development Group agreed on the first-ever common United Nations Development Group action plan for the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and several United Nations entities aligned their new strategic plans with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review both in timing and content.

41. As called for in Economic and Social Council resolution 2013/5, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Group and the High-level Committee on Management, developed a system-wide monitoring and reporting framework for the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, which is robust, evidence-based and cost-effective while imposing a minimum reporting burden on Governments and the United Nations system.

42. As called for in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (General Assembly resolution 67/226, para. 140), the United Nations Development Group developed standard operating procedures as guidelines for the work of United Nations country teams in countries that choose to adopt "Delivering as one". The standard operating procedures represent a key tool for operational coordination and effectiveness at the country level, and serve as a means to bring more coherence and better alignment between the policy directions set by Headquarters and the needs and corresponding implementation at the field level.

43. As part of the standard operating procedures, the United Nations Development Group and the High-level Committee on Management identified and prioritized a set of 36 measures to be undertaken by United Nations Headquarters to further support and advance the scope of options for country-level consolidated support services. These measures are consolidated in the plan of action for Headquarters and include initiatives in the areas of procurement, information and communications technology, human resources, logistics and transport, audit, finance and common premises.

44. In response to General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, which encourages Member States making non-core contributions to give priority to pooled, thematic and joint funding mechanisms applied at the global, regional and country levels, the United Nations Development Group launched the "Delivering Results Together" Fund as successor mechanism of the "Expanded 'Delivering as one' Funding Window". The Fund supports high-performing United Nations programmes in low-income and lower middle-income countries that are implementing the "Delivering as one" approach and have established a functioning One United Nations Fund at the country level.

45. In response to the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, which called upon the United Nations development system to pursue gender equality and the empowerment of women in country programmes, the United Nations Development

Group agreed on common principles and standards for gender equality marker systems. The United Nations Development Group issued guidance on gender equality marker systems to all United Nations country teams, which will guide the development of an effective and coherent approach for tracking resources that support the achievement of gender equality results, and will allow system-wide reporting on funds contributing to the promotion of gender equality.

46. As called for in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, the United Nations Development Group made it a priority to further improve the effective functioning of the resident coordinator system. To this effect, the United Nations Development Group strengthened the Resident Coordinator Assessment Centre to ensure that the profiles of resident coordinators are better aligned with the needs, priorities and challenges of programme countries. The new quadrennial comprehensive policy review mandates were reflected in the United Nations country team code of conduct and working relations guidance, which is a central tool for strengthening mutual accountability of the resident coordinator system at the country level.

47. In response to a request from the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2013/5 and as called for in General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, the United Nations Development Group reached a landmark agreement on a centralized funding modality in support of the resident coordinator system at the global, regional and country levels. The funding modality is based on system-wide cost-sharing among all United Nations Development Group member organizations and entered into effect on 1 January 2014. It seeks to ensure that resident coordinators have the necessary, stable and predictable resources to effectively fulfil their mandates.

V. Improving and innovating administrative and management functions of the United Nations system

48. At its twenty-fifth session in March 2013, the High-level Committee on Management approved its Strategic Plan for 2013-2016, outlining the priority objectives for the Committee and its networks for the next three to five years. Among the key drivers of the High-level Committee on Management strategic plan, are the mandates set by the General Assembly in its resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. The High-level Committee on Management strategic plan seeks to contribute to the commitment of Member States to enhance the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, accountability and credibility of the United Nations system through the redesign and operationalization of administrative and management functions — so as to make the United Nations system organizations more adaptive and agile in delivering their programmatic mandates.

A. Modernizing human resources management

49. The High-level Committee on Management human resources management agenda has, as its overarching goal, the continued development of the international civil service as an independent, neutral, highly skilled and engaged resource to meet the ever-changing requirements of the international community. The High-level

Committee on Management, in 2013, continued to focus on the implementation of the Inter-Organization Agreement concerning Transfer, Secondment or Loan of Staff among the Organizations Applying the United Nations Common System of Salaries and Allowances, adopted by the United Nations system organizations in 2012. In particular, the Committee reviewed current inter-agency mobility practices to identify bottlenecks and respective solutions and established an Inter-Agency Working Group proposing concrete measures to provide a solid legal and procedural framework for transfers, secondments and loans among the organizations at the Headquarters and field levels.

50. Through the High-level Committee on Management, CEB also engaged in a comprehensive experience exchange on the implementation of good practices in performance management in its member organizations. Based on the continued work of an Inter-Agency Working Group on Performance Management, CEB members presented and discussed good experiences and lessons learned with regard to managing performance of teams and individual staff members.

51. Responding to the call by the General Assembly in its resolutions 62/208 and 64/289 for improved harmonization in human resources, a pilot project promoting harmonized recruitment practices in the field has been successfully completed and is currently being expanded in additional pilot countries for subsequent global adoption. Tools have been created to simplify joint recruitment in order to speed up hiring and to increase mobility for national officers and General Service staff in the field in the "Delivering as one" pilot countries.

52. The CEB secretariat continued to act as focal point for the methodological issues and regular updating of rates for short-term staff performing interpretation, translation and related functions. The net rates for interpreters and translators were calculated and issued by the CEB secretariat every six months.

B. Improving United Nations business models

53. The High-level Committee on Management strategic plan for 2013-2016 identifies harmonization and simplification of business practices as a core activity of the Committee. In this context, the plan focuses on common and shared services, improved common procurement practices, and other initiatives to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations system. The actions under this priority area respond to General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review mandates on rationalization of business operations, inter-agency frameworks, establishment of common support services and greater collaboration in procurement. The feasibility study on enterprise resource planning inter-operability launched under the aegis of the Information and Communications Technology Network also falls under this priority area and is a direct response to relevant provisions in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review.

54. Several initiatives are under way in the area of common treasury services, which continue to deliver concrete results in the four focus areas of banking services, investments (including risk management), foreign exchange and payments. Negotiations are under way with the four largest banks with whom the United Nations does business to put in place global agreements that seek to gain benefits from increased economies of scale. Work has also commenced on negotiating new common banking agreements in large-volume and large-fee countries.

55. The High-level Committee on Management Finance and Budget Network has launched a project to develop common definitions of operating costs, paying due attention to the different business models of United Nations system organizations, in direct response to the quadrennial comprehensive policy review mandate in this respect.

56. The High-level Committee on Management Procurement Network has initiated a number of projects on the enhancement of common services, such as the common procurement of vehicles as well as the location-based procurement collaboration in Geneva, Rome, New York and Copenhagen. The High-level Committee on Management Procurement Network also continued its work to develop tools and methodologies to facilitate joint and common procurement at the country level. In collaboration with the United Nations System Staff College, the High-level Committee on Management has also supported the development of local capacity in United Nations country teams to implement the new approaches on joint procurement that these initiatives have delivered, including through train-the-trainer programmes.

57. In 2013, a new vendor registration system for procurement was introduced on the United Nations Global Marketplace, the common procurement portal of the United Nations system of organizations (https://www.ungm.org). This new system is expected to increase access to United Nations procurement by vendors from developing countries and from countries with economies in transition. Furthermore, it streamlines United Nations procurement processes, which reduces time and increases efficiency.

58. Recognizing the particular importance of support to operational activities for development, High-level Committee on Management and the United Nations Development Group continued their close cooperation to improve organizations' business models and make management and administrative processes more coherent and compatible across the United Nations system, to generate cost efficiencies while improving the quality of delivery, and to pursue the behavioural and cultural changes that are needed to modernize the work environment.

59. In this respect and in response to the request in General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review to further pursue higher-quality, more effective and cost-efficient support services in programme countries, the United Nations Development Group piloted a common business operations strategy as a medium-term strategic planning framework for advancing consolidated support services in 11 countries. The strategy framework utilizes the harmonized rules and regulations delivered by the High-level Committee on Management to develop integrated support services at the country level and focuses on cost reduction and quality improvement in the areas of procurement, information and communications technology, logistics and transport, human resources and building management.

60. The High-level Committee on Management and the United Nations Development Group also assumed joint leadership in the design of an integrated business service centre and launched a joint United Nations system service facility in Brasilia. The facility, which is expected to be operational in 2015, will generate significant savings from increased efficiencies and reduced transaction costs.

61. Finally, under the leadership of the Department of Safety and Security of the United Nations Secretariat, CEB continued to make progress on issues relating to staff safety and security, in particular through the review and endorsement of new and updated policies developed with the active engagement of all members of the Inter-Agency Security Management Network.

C. Implementing the International Public Sector Accounting Standards

62. Since the adoption of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS)[1] in 2006 by the United Nations system through High-level Committee on Management (CEB/2006/3), 21 organizations have completed their IPSAS implementation successfully, with 10 of them issuing their first IPSAS-compliant financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2012 and obtaining unqualified audit opinions in 2013. The 11 organizations which adopted IPSAS in prior years continued to obtain unqualified audit opinions on their IPSAS-compliant financial statements. Three organizations with an adoption date of 2014 have made significant progress, achieving several critical milestones, and are on track with their IPSAS implementation plans. These results attest to the capability of the United Nations system to adopt IPSAS and sustain compliance with IPSAS to improve the quality of financial reporting, enhancing transparency and accountability.

63. Focus of the United Nations system-wide IPSAS project has shifted from IPSAS implementation to supporting sustained IPSAS compliance and ensuring realization of the benefits of IPSAS. Some of these post-implementation activities come with challenges. Organizations continue to share experiences and leverage lessons learned bilaterally and through the Task Force on Accounting Standards. In 2013 the Task Force commissioned four thematic focus groups led by members of the Task Force and supported by the system-wide IPSAS project's team to address the dividends and recurring costs of IPSAS implementation, the statement of internal control, reporting on inventories and useful lives of property, plant and equipment, and recognition of non-exchange revenue.

VI. Improving transparency and accountability

64. In response to paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 68/20 and paragraph 232 of the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on its fifty-third session (A/68/16), CEB made further efforts to interact and communicate with Member States through a series of formal and informal exchanges with Member States organized in the course of the year. These exchanges included four formal briefings on the work of CEB by the CEB secretariat to the Economic and Social Council in February, May, July and December 2013. In addition, the Committee for Programme and Coordination was apprised of the Board's key activities in June 2013. An informal presentation by the Vice-Chair of the High-level Committee on Management on harmonization of business practices was given on 5 February 2013.

[1] International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) are independently developed financial reporting standards which are considered best practice for public sector entities.

65. CEB also made further progress in improving the sharing of information on its work through its website (www.unsceb.org). A new release of the CEB website was launched in March 2013, addressing points and requests raised by the various stakeholder groups that the website serves. Improvements were made in the general areas of content coverage, navigation and search, presentation and usability and performance.

66. One key improvement made during this period was in the presentation of United Nations system statistics. The roll-out of the harmonization of business practices financial statistics project resulted in an improved data definition, collection and visualization of organizations' individual and collective revenue and expenditure data. Based on the success of this initiative, work also began on harmonizing the presentation of human resources and procurement aggregated statistics data. These new sections will be introduced in the course of 2014 and leverage recent developments within the United Nations system in the area of data visualization.

67. In addition, the directory of senior officials was migrated from the United Nations system extranet to the CEB website in December 2013. This move was supported by a revision of the data, the collection of focal points within each organization and a decentralized publishing workflow.

VII. Coordination between the Chief Executives Board and other jointly financed bodies

68. Through its subsidiary bodies, CEB continues to substantially contribute to the processes of both ICSC and the Joint Inspection Unit.

69. The Human Resource Network of the High-level Committee on Management has a long history of meaningful participation in the sessions of ICSC. In 2013, the Network agreed to provide input into the ICSC comprehensive review of the United Nations common system compensation package, with the Co-Chairs of the Network participating as part of a contact group to support the development of a detailed workplan for the review. In addition, the Network contributed to the Commission's discussions regarding the mandatory age of separation.

70. CEB and the Joint Inspection Unit continued their already strong collaboration, especially in the light of Member States' requests to the Joint Inspection Unit to increase its consideration of issues of a system-wide nature. During the preparation of its reports, the Joint Inspection Unit was invited to interact with the mechanisms of CEB. For example, the High-level Committee on Management, through its Procurement Network, provided input into the preparation of the report on long-term agreements in procurement in the United Nations system, and the Information and Communications Technology Network supported the preparation of the report on enterprise resource planning systems. In addition, the Human Resources Network provided input into reports that concern human resource issues. These examples are indicative of the regular participation of the sub-bodies of CEB in the preparation of reports of the Joint Inspection Unit.

71. CEB also continues to assist the Joint Inspection Unit with the identification of relevant topics of system-wide impact for the programme of work of the Joint Inspection Unit.

VIII. Conclusions

72. Effective and coordinated action across programmatic, management and operational issues in support of intergovernmental mandates is essential in order for the United Nations system to deliver results that address global challenges facing the international community. In 2013, CEB, under the leadership of the Secretary-General, facilitated the United Nations system efforts to work together in a coherent and coordinated manner.

73. The quadrennial comprehensive policy review requires a coherent and coordinated response by the United Nations system and provides important directives to CEB and subsidiary bodies for follow-up action. Improving and innovating administrative and management functions of the United Nations system continued to be a high priority for CEB in 2013. In this context, progress has been made in the areas of human resources management and the simplification and harmonization of business practices.

74. Dialogue and interaction between CEB and Member States increased in 2013 through a series of briefings and presentation by the Secretary of the Board and the leadership of the High-level Committee on Management. The transparency and accountability of CEB to Member States was further enhanced by the development of a revised CEB website. CEB also continued its cooperation with other jointly financed coordination bodies, in particular with the Joint Inspection Unit and the International Civil Service Commission, and strengthened its cooperation with those bodies on issues of common concern.

Annex

Summary of the status of implementation of the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on the work of its fifty-third session (A/68/16)

Conclusions and recommendations	*Status of implementation*
The Committee reaffirmed the importance of achieving the Millennium Development Goals and welcomed the periodic review by CEB of their implementation at the country level, as well as the Board's support to Member States. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, to continue this support to Member States (para. 230).	Eight countries (Burkina Faso, El Salvador, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Niger and United Republic of Tanzania) were considered by CEB in two Millennium Development Goal review sessions held in 2013. Implementation of commitments made at review sessions will continue to be monitored. The periodic review of the implementation of Millennium Development Goals will be carried out through 2015.
The Committee emphasized the key role to be played by CEB in ensuring coordinated United Nations system-wide support in the preparation of and follow-up to the post-2015 United Nations development agenda, in accordance with relevant intergovernmental mandates. For this purpose, the Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, to report to the Committee in the context of its annual overview report to be submitted at its fifty-fifth session, on ways and means of strengthening that role to foster policy coherence in the United Nations system in order to ensure coordinated and effective action on the wide range of programmatic, management and operational issues linked to that global agenda (para. 231).	CEB fostered system-wide coherence and coordination in support of Member States' efforts in the preparation of the post-2015 development agenda by developing a United Nations system-wide view of the recommendations and findings of the report of the post-2015 High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda as input to the report of the Secretary-General on accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (A/67/257); facilitating a global conversation as an input to the intergovernmental deliberations on the post-2015 development agenda; and reflecting on the policy and institutional implications of a universal post-2015 development agenda. In 2014, CEB will continue to explore how the United Nations system can best support Member States in the preparation of a new development agenda, including implementation at the country level.
The Committee reaffirmed the importance of continuing the dialogue between CEB and Member States in order to further improve the Board's transparency and accountability to Member States, and noted the efforts by CEB in this area, in particular the improvements to the Board's website. It recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, to continue these efforts (para. 232).	In order to enhance transparency and accountability, CEB held a number of formal and informal exchanges with Member States of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, and the Economic and Social Council. CEB improved the sharing of information on its work by launching a new website which included a number of enhanced features in the areas of content coverage, navigation and search, presentation and usability and performance.

Conclusions and recommendations	*Status of implementation*
The Committee recognized the work of CEB on the harmonization and simplification of business practices, and welcomed the instances in which opportunities for efficiencies and the reduction of administrative and procedural burdens had been generated. In that regard, the Committee requested that it be informed of future progress and recommended that the General Assembly bring to the attention of the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, the need to continue to better address that issue (para. 233).	The High-level Committee on Management provided an update on the work of the Committee to the General Assembly Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in May 2013. The briefings provided information on the programme of work of the Committee and on the results and achievements of the initiatives that have been or are being undertaken.
The Committee noted that some of its recommendations that the General Assembly endorsed had not been implemented, and therefore it reiterated its recommendations to the Assembly to bring to the attention of the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, the following concerns:	
(a) The need to ensure that the Board's activities and initiatives, including those related to system-wide coherence, which also included "Delivering as one" as defined in section IV.C of resolution 67/226, were in line with intergovernmental mandates;	As called for in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, the United Nations Development Group has streamlined the "Delivering as one" approach based on Standard Operating Procedures for United Nations country teams in countries wishing to adopt the approach, as well as a Plan of Action to address remaining challenges and bottlenecks at the headquarters level for ensuring effective implementation of the approach.
(b) The need to ensure the enhanced alignment of the measures of the High-level Committee on Management with the existing United Nations legislative framework, including in the area of procurement (para. 234).	At its session held in October 2013, the High-level Committee on Management reviewed the activities in its strategic plan against the mandates of General Assembly resolution 67/226 and other resolutions and found that all activities, including those related to procurement, are fully in line with existing mandates.
With regard to the inclusion in the report of CEB of a summary of the status of implementation of the Committee's conclusions and recommendations, the Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, to ensure that in future such summaries are improved and evidence-based (para. 235).	Efforts have been made to enhance the presentation and content of the summary of the status of implementation of the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination by providing more details on the work of CEB.

Conclusions and recommendations	*Status of implementation*
The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, to continue to facilitate opportunities for developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the procurement processes of the United Nations system, in accordance with existing rules and regulations (para. 236).	Through its Procurement Network, the High-level Committee on Management has continued its emphasis on increasing the vendor base for procurement. With support from the High-level Committee on Management, a simplified vendor registration system was put in place at the United Nations Global Marketplace, the system-wide procurement portal, in November 2013. The United Nations Office for Project Services produces a detailed report on procurement in the United Nations system and the share of United Nations procurement by developing countries and countries with economies in transition has continuously increased. In 2012, the latest report issued, a total of 61.7 per cent of United Nations system procurement came from developing countries and from countries with economies in transition, up by 2 per cent from 2011. Comprehensive procurement data, and the full report, are available on the CEB website.